

# TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

## INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT— THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

*Henry Volken*

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA : SOME PROBLEMS

*Alfred de Souza*

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

*John B. Chethimattam*

HUMAN WELL-BEING ON EARTH AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

*Samuel Rayan*

CHRISTIANITY AND INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT

*Sebastian Kappen*

HINDUISM AND DEVELOPMENT

*K. N. Mishra*

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

*Colin Sheppard*

BULLETIN

*Joseph Vattamattam*

DISCUSSION FORUM

*Joseph Kottukappally*



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# JEEVADHARA

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# The Problem of Man

India's Development -  
Theological Perspectives

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# JEEVADHARA

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# Editorial

The biggest problem facing two-thirds of mankind today is poverty and under-development. No religion can be blind to this, nor can any theology worth the name. Hence our attention, in the present number of *Jeevadhara*\*, is focused on theological perspectives of India's development. Her problems naturally are not the same as those of other developing countries. There is no universal formula of development, no open sesame that will reveal a spectacle of prosperity to all under-developed countries in the same way and at the same time. Nor is there any point in being given a developed country to imitate as a model. We must develop according to our own resources most advantageously deployed, and according to our social and cultural genius. But the theological issues involved in India's development will be mostly similar to those of two-thirds of the world. We do not, however, presume to give here the last word on the theology of development.

An attempt has been made to take up specific themes and problems concerned with India's self-development and liberation from poverty, illiteracy and so forth, instead of airy generalities. Henry Volken, distrusting mere notional concepts of development sheds light on certain salient features of India's development. He is all for liberation from the political and cultural domination of economically developed countries as well as from socio-political structures that breed injustice and inequalities. In his view it is for us to think out a theology of liberation with the help of men actually involved in the fieldwork of development. Our second contributor, Alfred de Souza, points out some of the facts, problems and trends in India's developmental process. The first three Five Year Plans, he observes, have brought about much progress in agriculture and industry, and have increased facilities for

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\* *Jeevadhara* is a Malayalam word, derived from Sanskrit, meaning 'Life-Current' and pronounced 'd̐ji:vadha:ra'.

health and literacy. But an imbalance of growth in the first two of these sectors, and the preponderant attention given to industry left 80% of the population of India, the peasantry, out of the developmental process. The subsequent "Green Revolution" stepped up agricultural production but through defective organization has only made the rich richer. His point is that development must take the common citizen forward; he must be involved in it. Moreover, a population growth of 12 million a year neutralizes, to some extent, the efforts towards development.

John B. Chethimattam explains the kind of theology involved in liberation. The irrelevance of traditional theology produced as a reaction the so-called secular theology which is all about man and nature. The danger of seeking to liberate man only from material want is that we make him a prisoner of this secular city. Liberation concerns itself with the whole man, body and soul, as a totality. The Church should continue Christ's work of liberating the whole man from need and suffering. The Church is not merely a sign of liberation but the seat: not only a movement for liberation but the living reality of it. From Samuel Rayan we hear of the urgent need for a theology of development in India's context and the relation of earthly welfare to the salvation that Jesus brought to men. Though He spoke no word about liberation and development He spent His whole life in freeing men from the bondage of disease and of affliction by devils, and in confronting oppressive structures and traditions. The Incarnation is a re-affirming of the world He created in love, and His Death on the Cross an affirming of man's freedom to be true to God and to serve others. Finally, since love for others is the substance in practice of Jesus' revelation, liberation-development belongs to the Gospel of Jesus.

Sebastian Kappen lays bare the evils of India's socio-economic system which a privileged minority are using to exploit the masses. This minority with the co-operation of politicians seeks to perpetuate an iniquitous order which benefits it and enslaves the masses. There is the need for a rapid structural transformation and a radical change in our way of thinking so that equality may become an accomplished fact, and prolonged exploitation of the have-nots may be ended. Christianity, the



article continues, brought much that was good to India and sowed the seeds of a social transformation, but unfortunately the majority of Christians themselves have joined hands with reactionary forces. In the guidelines set down, in the article, for a Christian commitment we are reminded that all men have been called by Christ to an eschatological family of love. We are expected to be critical of evil in the existing structures and to carry our criticism into action. Moreover, we must so express ourselves as to ensure that the masses become aware of the injustice they suffer and co-operate actively in reform. In the Bulletin, Joseph Vattamattam, speaking from inside the industrial scene, points out the resources and the potential of economic prosperity in Kerala and explains how the present serious problem of unemployment can be solved by the people of Kerala themselves. He then brings in consideration of the part played by the Church hitherto and the opportunities for a Christian mission to promote goodwill and material upliftment. In the series 'Traditional Religions and Development', K. N. Mishra contributes a short article on 'Hinduism and Development'. He shows that there is not only no conflict between the two, but that Hinduism wants to help its followers secure *abhyudaya* (prosperity) here, and *Mōkṣa* hereafter. 'Islam and Development' was also included in our plan, but we could not get a satisfactory contribution.

Colin Sheppard deals with Education and Development in India, and the obstructiveness of short-sighted educational planning and an obsolete educational system. Student unrest in India, he thinks, results not only from a clash of new and traditional outlooks but from the inadequacy of the existing system to answer present needs, not only in respect of employment but of that idealism which makes education ultimately worth while as a means to a fuller, satisfying life. How education can be reorganised and made more realistic for the development of the country is one of the issues taken up in this article.

It is an irony of our age that when science has brought the world together, and distance has been conquered, and inter-communication between the parts is easier and quicker than ever before, the world is more than ever divided into two power groups, though now and then the balance of power passes

through kaleidoscopic changes. It has to be stressed most emphatically that development is the integral growth of "every man and the whole man" (*Populorum Progressio*). It is a process by which men create for themselves conditions of life such as are increasingly worthy of their greatness as God's sons — a process by which men keep growing to their full flowering in all the beauty of their created powers and all the fragrance of their social dimensions. No nation can really and integrally develop at the expense of another. Theologically speaking it is a misnomer to call this development, because it falsifies the Biblical revelation of the oneness of humanity. Even philosophically such a country cannot be called developed because there is no real love but only group selfishness, and selfishness makes men shrink, not grow.

This brings us to the problem of the economically underdeveloped two-thirds of mankind. Their condition need not always imply lethargy and want of industry but may be due to exploitation of them by economically developed nations through some form of colonialism or of apparently humanitarian aids in the form of experts and money. It may also be due to a minority at home in collusion with forces abroad or with a clique of their country's politicians. Essential to all development is liberation from the fetters of the spirit and from domination by the establishment either from within or from abroad. But liberation and development are not mutually exclusive nor do they need to be separated by any time-interval. They go together and continually react upon each other, and the resultant dynamism will release energy for the onward march. Liberation cannot replace development. It has a negative ring, and implies freedom from something. It has little meaning unless it is for something which is nothing but development. What we need, therefore, is an integral theology: a theology of liberation and development.

Coming to our own country in particular, we have victoriously carried out a military operation for the liberation of our neighbours. Three cheers for our Jawans on land, in the air and on the sea. The most beneficial result to this country, it would seem, is the opening of our eyes to the evils of dependence

on other countries to the detriment of our freedom; to the recognition, more than ever, of the value of liberation. Not that we should be blind or insensible to the vast amount of aid in money and expertise that we have received from other countries nor should we refuse to receive any more in future, provided it is given without strings. We should also be extremely careful lest after liberation from the dependence on one power-group we should fall into obsequious dependence on another. We would then be in no better plight, or perhaps in a worse one.

There is still another danger. In the glow of victory we should not close our eyes to the competition for power from the top level downwards and the clinging to it even by foul means, or to the abuse of it for one's own interest or for that of one's group. Other evils to look out for are the constant splitting of political parties into splinter groups, red-tapism, bureaucratic corruption and widespread adulteration of goods. We should learn a lesson from the unsatisfactory performance of two decades of planning, with the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer, and the number of unemployed and underemployed, especially among the educated, running into millions. We cannot be complacent in the face of these evils but should do some hard thinking immediately and take firm action to eradicate them. It is here that the intellectuals of the Country have a significant role to play in bringing about a change for the better.

We Christians, instead of bemoaning the helplessness that ordinarily goes with a small minority, should join hands with the other citizens and be one with them in the work of the reconstruction of society. For that purpose liberation and development as envisaged in the Gospel of Jesus should begin within the bosom of the Church. By our devotion to truth, according to His promise, we shall achieve true freedom. With His love infused into our hearts we shall grow to His stature. We shall then be prepared to spend ourselves for our countrymen. This is Christian life, a life for others.



## One Year Completed

*Jeevadhara* in two editions, English and Malayalam, has already completed one year of publication. We have been encouraged by scholars in India and abroad, by their esteem and appreciation and their contributions, and we are thankful to them. The Malayalam edition has been somewhat hard reading for some of our readers. We promise them easier and simpler versions this year, without, however, lowering the standard.

## A New Feature

We are opening a new column entitled 'Discussion Forum' this year, though we had a mind to introduce it even at the start. The main incentive for beginning this journal was the love of truth. We shall proclaim the truth even if it is unpleasant without fear or flattery, without being deterred by frowns or by hindrance from any quarter whatsoever, from an individual or from the establishment. Contributors to the journal are free to express their views, but they are requested to bring forward solid reasons in support of their contentions. As was said in the Introduction to Vol. I, No. I, "For the force of its statements, opinions and propositions *Jeevadhara* will rely on the reasons and arguments put forward in the articles and the evidence adduced in support of them." Still, there will be difference of opinion. Readers are welcome to voice their views on those expressed in our articles provided they have solid counter-arguments. But no space will be allowed to cheap opinions in the form of letters to the Editor.

The continuance of this new feature will depend entirely on the response it meets with from our readers.

Theology Centre  
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Constantine Manalel



# The Concept of Development

The concept of development has meaning only in the context of concrete commitment to Development. Many among those most committed to development set out not with clear concepts but with an ear for the yearnings of contemporary man in India and the rest of Asia. Such leaders in development-action have arrived at a concept of development which is more intuitive than notional. In this context it may be more precise to speak of a vision of development, which, because of its dynamic nature of making men reflect on a concrete challenge of history, may not be so clear and precise as to satisfy philosophers and theologians. It may be good at the beginning of this article to think about the lives of some of the leaders in question who have made history and have released a dormant potential for development among their people: Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Martin Luther King, Mao-Tse-Tung and others. When we reflect on the powerful historic movements they have initiated, we become aware of the weakness inherent in more complete concepts of development which we find, for example, in the Social Teaching of the Church. These, because of their universality remain abstractions, often not very relevant to concrete issues.

## Various Dimensions of Development

It is a well-known fact that all concepts are thought out within the sub-culture of each thinker. This explains why there is so much ambiguity, even in the human sciences, when it comes to clarifying the concept of development, which in fact always refers to a very complex process of social change. The *technologist* sees development mainly in the acceptance of new technology. In his own way he is right, for we know that development of agriculture, for example, takes place when farmers accept modern practices of farming. The *economist* lays emphasis on increase of production. To him increased saving and productive investment enhancing the productivity of man is of prime impor-

tance. The *sociologist* looks on technological and economic development as concrete expressions of a more basic and dynamic socio-cultural change. Machines and capital do not by themselves bring about development. *Development is the achievement of motivated people.* Kusum Nair in her book *Blossoms in the Dust* analyses rural development from this perspective. She comes to the conclusion that without a radical change in the mentality, attitudes and social institutions which embody the values of a given society, the rate of change is bound to be slow in our villages despite heavy capital investment. Thus it is evident that a specialist of a particular human science thinks with the background of the goals and values of his own profession. It is of course true that the various theories of development, current in our age, have tried to integrate the valid insights of various sciences. But everybody has, at least unconsciously, a philosophy of life and of man before he sets out to think about development.

In our days a new awareness has come to life, an awareness of the *political dimension* of development. Those who have political power at any level of an organised society take decisions and make policies which largely determine the actual process of development. This new consciousness was manifested unmistakably by the people of India during the last election. The performance of the Five Year Plans has brought about much frustration especially among the masses. The fact that a privileged minority has enjoyed the lion's share of the actual achievements of development has become obvious to the larger section of the people. They now know that what is important is not mere policies for creating a just society but courageous implementation of them. The people want political power to serve the cause of justice. Through their vote the people of India have declared that the real goal of development is wider distribution according to the demands of social justice and that increase in production is only a means to that end.

### **Development or Liberation**

This new emphasis on the political dimension is bringing about a complete change of perspective through which the concept of development is gradually being replaced by the more dynamic

and humanistic concept of *Liberation*. This has already deeply affected the Christian way of reflecting on development. In countries like South America and the Philippines, to name just two, a 'theology of development' is gradually being replaced by a 'theology of liberation'; the first was more closely related to the Social Teaching of the Church, the second has as its starting-point a concrete analysis of the diverse forces promoting or blocking genuine development in a particular society. The new approach gives much more scope for creative thinking to the local church which must come to grips with the vital issues of social change in a given nation. It imposes, in fact, a great deal of responsibility on the laymen involved with other citizens in a concrete struggle for human liberation. The Church needs their experience so as to be able to bring her more general social teaching down to earth. Pope Paul VI in his letter to the President of 'Justice and Peace', Cardinal Roy, has recently affirmed the need for a political commitment of Christians and for their undertaking a realistic analysis of the local situation. The concept of development has, all along, been vague and ambiguous. Those who benefit from the existing structures tend to be conservative and to appreciate the role of the social and political establishment. Those who are aware of the lot of the masses with their marginal subsistence search for deeper reasons of failure and of the growing unrest among them, and to reject traditional concepts of development as being powerless to overcome the ever-increasing inequality between the rich and the poor. Facts speak in their favour. Despite all the talk the result of the first 'development' decade of the U. N. O. is a wider gap between the rich and the poor countries. Concepts like neo-colonialism and imperialism are being used increasingly outside marxist circles to denote the domination of economically weak nations by powerful developed ones. These claim to help on the development process in the 'Third World' with aid while, at the same time, they allow the weak countries to be crushed under an unjust system of international trade. Barbara Ward is perfectly right in saying that the social, cultural and economic development of the poorer nations is more difficult to achieve today than a century ago. South Americans know that the United States has taken much higher business profits out of their country than the amount of financial aid given to them. We in India are filled with

anxiety over a colossal debt of foreign aid imposed on us. The so-called 'development' decade has only made us more dependent on the rich countries of the world. It is being increasingly realized today that liberation from the domination of economically powerful countries is a prerequisite for national development. Unless development is placed in the context of international social justice, it becomes an empty word. But this is precisely what the rich countries in the world refuse to allow, with incredible obstinacy and blindness. Consequently the term 'development' does not express the aspirations of the poorer nations. The more realistic, dynamic and historical concept of liberation expresses better the real challenge of our age. It contains a condemnation of the economic, political and cultural domination of the 'Third World' by the powerful nations. It sees history as a process of liberation in which each nation is to be the master of its own destiny, and every citizen a responsible and emancipated agent of nation-building.

### **Socialism in Theory and in Practice**

When development is seen in the perspective of liberation the injustices inherent in national development and in the systems and structures which produce them are brought to light. Within developing countries we detect inherent contradictions. Verbally social justice is proclaimed as the goal of development, but in the actual process promises to reduce inequalities remain largely unfulfilled. Just as, internationally, rich countries become richer and poor countries poorer, so within developing nations the powerful become more powerful and the weak grow weaker. There is a silent conspiracy of the powerful in the poor countries too. Through development the productive capacity of the nation increases, but economic, social and political power are not redistributed. The deprivation suffered by the masses in course of time produces a mood of desperation, and a ferment of revolution gradually permeates the nation. We see this happening all over Asia. Hence the seductive attractions of marxist ideologies of liberation. It cannot be denied that a marxist analysis of society has helped many, among them the more reflective type of student, to see how institutions, systems and structures embody hidden violence against the weak and unorganised. Professor Parmar, while addressing Indian youth, rightly said: "If you are sincere



about being engaged in the process of development, it means getting involved in the processes which will change and shape institutions and power-relations of society. Then you will have to have great courage to see and accept the real challenge it poses in terms of actions." The Church in India may do well to reflect on these words.

## A Theology of Human Liberation

In the context of what I have tried to express so far, it would seem of great importance for the Church in India to think out creatively a theology of liberation. A theologian from the Philippines, present at the Nagpur International Theological Conference, told me that a theology of liberation as distinct from that of development is really helping the Church, in his country, to come out of a narrow approach to development and to go into the more crucial issues of building a new society. In recent years we in India have made some progress in understanding participation in development as an integral part of the mission of the Church. But we worked out our theories from concepts of development borrowed from the West. They helped intensify our motivation for commitment to Church-sponsored development projects. The time has come now, however, to exercise our imagination more creatively. It is an illusion to think that Indian theologians can build up a dynamic theology of liberation without the help of socially and politically committed laymen. But if courageous commitment is expected from the laity it must also be found among Church leaders. The words of Archbishop Alberto of the Philippines, spoken at the Synod recently held in Rome, are applicable to them: what the world expects from the Church is not general principles (or concepts of development) but specific action, and a declaration of what she intends to do about injustice including her own. The Archbishop also emphasized the need for *education for justice* within the Church. This education must train people to evaluate their societies critically and to be sensitive to the injustices present in them. It should not attack injustice platitudinously but penetrate to its roots in the systems and structures that breed it, and attack it there.

What ultimately matters is not the ideas the Church has about development, but what impact the Church and Christians

make on development. A theology of liberation would help us evaluate, with reference to the social situation and the revolutionary demands of the Gospel, the quality of the Church's participation in genuine development. It would liberate our parish communities from placid contentment with charitable activities and make them sensitive to the dramatic situation in which we live. As long as only a few priests and laymen are engaged in implementing various development projects, it is hardly possible for the Church in India to be the leaven of society, in an explosive socio-political situation which is generating impatient longings for liberation among our people, who have the right to live as men.

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Henry Volken

# Socio-Economic Development in India: Some Problems

The economic structure of India and the process of socio-economic development can be adequately understood only in the context of the Five Year Plans. The Russians were the first to experiment with a planned economy, and India has been greatly influenced in the choice of planning techniques by the socialistic model as well as by other models of economic growth elaborated in the democratic countries of the West. Soon after India became independent, a planning organisation – the Planning Commission – was established as an integral part of the governmental policy-making machinery. The concept of planning in India, though it has been influenced by the socialistic countries, has never been of a totalitarian type. The country has what is known as a ‘mixed’ economy. A significant proportion of the plan outlays has been invested in the private sector, and this includes practically the whole of the investment in agriculture. The ratio of investment in the ‘public’ and ‘private’ sectors during the first three plans (1951 – 1966) has been approximately 60 : 40. As in most developing countries our government is, as the Pearson Commission Report notes, “the principal investor in major industries, the director of overall development, and the guardian of social objectives.”<sup>1</sup>

The general objective of the Five Year Plans has been the evolution of a socialistic pattern of society by a strategy of social change and economic mobilisation for development. More specifically, India’s developmental strategy is centred on four major objectives: economic self-reliance, a high rate of growth

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1. *Partners in Development: Report of the Commission on International Development* (Praeger Paperback: New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 285.

through capital accumulation and increased investment, the gradual reduction of sectoral and social disparities, and a more equitable pattern of income distribution. These goals describe the dominant character of the Indian concept of socialism, and during the last twenty years there has been a constant struggle, as Kothari and others have pointed out, to maintain the equilibrium between growth and accumulation, on the one hand, and equitable distribution and social justice on the other.<sup>2</sup>

### Economic Performance

As a result of the first three plans, the net national income increased by about 69 per cent or at a compound rate of 3.6 per cent annually at constant prices. The per capita income in real terms increased during the same period by 28 per cent, an annual rate of approximately 1.8 per cent. A decline set in towards the end of this period largely because of the conflict with Pakistan and China and the two successive drought years 1965-67. The economy showed an upward trend in 1968 when a breakthrough was achieved by the "Green Revolution" on the agricultural front. The Pearson Commission reviewing the performance of India's plans for socio-economic development states that "gross national production per head rose from 1 to 1.5 per cent during the 1950-67 period, exports by 2 per cent and industrial production by over 7 per cent. In these two decades, India created an extensive infrastructure to service its burgeoning industry and its agriculture. Generation of electricity, for example, was multiplied by seven, enough to service industry and to start rural electrification. Investment quadrupled over the three plan periods and social services expanded rapidly. Educational enrolment grew by 7 per cent annually, and health services expanded rapidly."<sup>3</sup>

The evaluation of the Pearson Commission is expressed in growth rates that tend to conceal the problems of unbalanced growth, which the Five Year Plans have raised in the agricultural

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2. Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, Ltd., 1970) p. 340.

3. *Partners in Development*, p. 9.



(or traditional) sector and the industrial (or modern) sector. The disequilibrium in the sectoral rates of growth is one of the consequences of what might be called, to use the terminology developed by Keith Marsden, a "dual development strategy."<sup>4</sup> The danger in the resource gap technique of planning, Marsden notes, is that the concentration on economic growth objectives tends to push into the background desirable social objectives such as improved employment opportunities, the upgrading of minimum standards of living, and the narrowing of income disparities within the country.

The plans have followed the rationale of the "dual development" strategy, concentrating the bulk of capital investment in the industrial or advanced sector in the belief that rapid industrialisation would create conditions for wider utilisation of the abundant labour available and reduce inequalities of income distribution. But what has in fact happened is that, though a decline in productivity levels in the traditional sector has been prevented, the advanced sector has achieved considerably more expansion with the result that the gap between the two sectors has widened. In other words, the majority of the population (nearly 80 per cent) are left *outside* the development process. "In general, it is clear," Kerr, Dunlop and others point out, "that the developing countries can build industrialised enclaves more quickly than they can develop their rural sectors."<sup>5</sup> This unbalanced growth in the agricultural and industrial sectors cannot but have serious repercussions on the entire economy of the country because about half the national income is derived from agriculture which supports three-fourths of the population and provides important raw materials for industry.

The effects of the dual economics which have resulted from the Five Year Plans can be seen in the magnitude of rural

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4. See Keith Marsden, "Towards a Synthesis of Economic Growth and Social Justice," *International Labour Review* (November, 1969), pp. 389-418.

5. Clark Kerr, John Dunlop, Frederick Harbison and Charles Myers, "Postscript to 'Industrialism and Industrial Man'," *International Labour Review* 103 (June, 1971), p. 526.

poverty and unemployment. As B. S. Minhas of the Planning Commission has noted, about 250 million Indians today have per capita monthly levels of consumption of less than Rs 20 at 1960-61 prices. Nearly 215 million of these people who live below a normative poverty line are located in the rural sector and over 160 million of them have consumption levels of less than one rupee a day at current prices.<sup>6</sup> The problem of poverty, unemployment and underemployment in the rural sector cannot be solved by the acceleration of industry. In view of the fact that nearly 20 million people are totally landless and that about 27 million cultivating families have holdings of less than 2.5 acres, the desperate need is to enlarge the production base of the rural farmers (for example by "consolidation") and to make it more efficient (in terms of physical planning at the local level). The Government of India is attempting to alleviate the massive problems of rural poverty and unemployment by two short-term programmes: the Crash Rural Employment programme estimated to cost Rs 25 crores and the marginal and small farmers' programme.

It should be noted that the Green Revolution has made rich farmers richer through increased productivity, but there has been no "trickle-down" effect. The bulk of the farmers are not sharing in this sudden prosperity. The majority of farmers in India are marginal or small cultivators who do not have easy access to credit needed for the inputs of fertiliser, improved seeds and agricultural implements. The developmental benefits of governmental intervention through cooperatives, credit facilities, and other services, associated with the Green Revolution, have been monopolised by the better-off farmers belonging to the upper strata of rural society.<sup>7</sup>

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6. B. S. Minhas, "The Poor, the Weak and the Fourth Plan," in *Challenge of Poverty in India* (ed) A. J. Fonseca (Delhi: Vikas Publications 1971), pp. 60-71.

7. C. Rajagopalan and Jaspal Singh, *Adoption of Agricultural Innovations* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1971), pp. 47-61. See also Gunnar Myrdal, *The Challenge of World Poverty* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), pp. 90-146.

## The demographic factor

Every year 12 million people, the population of a country like Australia, increase the pressure on land, urban facilities and social services. It is not only that more people have to be fed and clothed, but there is the dilemma of providing this huge mass of people with education and health facilities and employment. Most of this increase in the population is registered in the agricultural sector.

The problems created by the rapid increase in population began to be recognised in the early 1950s. An intensive effort is now being made by the government to reduce the birth rate by half, from 43 per thousand to 22 in 1978-79. Even if this target is achieved, there will be the gigantic problem created by the age-pattern of the population: according to the 1961 Census, 57.7 per cent of the population were 24 and under, and 41 per cent were under 14. The high rate of population growth (about 2.5 per cent per annum) and the dramatic increase in life expectancy have important implications for the development and utilisation of human resources in India. In 1921, for instance, about 4.3 million people turned 15; in 1970 this number rose to 12.2 million and these young adolescents who have turned 15 can expect a potential work life of 53 years.<sup>8</sup> Even if family planning programmes in India succeed in reducing the fertility rate and slowing down the rate of population growth, they cannot affect the magnitude of the employment problem in the decade of the seventies since the entrants of the future labour force have already been born.

The consequences of the population explosion are to be seen in all spheres of life, particularly education and employment. According to the National Institute of Health Administration and Education, out of 17 million pregnant women in the course of any one year 12 million are estimated to be suffering from nutritional anaemia. Similarly, because of severe malnutrition,

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8. See George Tobias, *Human Resources in India* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1971), p. 11 ff.

children may experience varying degrees of brain damage and even irreversible mental retardation.<sup>9</sup>

Another aspect of the impact of the demographic factor on the economic life of the country is the tremendous increase of student enrolment at all stages of the educational system. The quantitative expansion of the educational system has been paralleled by the steady diminution of quality education and the frustrations of the educated unemployed. Not only has education been expanding faster than employment opportunities in the labour market, but it is generally not adapted to the needs of industry. This is true not only of general education but also of technical training.<sup>10</sup> The major problems of the decade of the seventies are going to be urban and rural under employment.

### Politics of development

Though the Five Year Plans have recorded substantial achievements in the agricultural and industrial sectors, the general performance has not been, as we have pointed out, altogether satisfactory. The concatenation of several factors hindered the successful achievement of several Plan "targets". Gunnar Myrdal has pointed out the important distinction that needs to be made between the "Ideal" plan and planning as a practical art. Targets will not be automatically achieved merely by economic action, for example, by the infusion of capital. In India the economist and bureaucratic administrator dominated the planning exercise and insufficient recognition was given to the need of establishing an infrastructure of social patterns of behaviour and motivation which are crucial determinants of receptivity to innovation and change. Nor again was there realistic understanding of what might be termed the politics of development.<sup>11</sup>

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9. See T. R. Tewari, "Investment in Man: A survey of Health Conditions," in *Challenge of Poverty in India*, pp. 115-127.

10. See my article "Education and Employment," in *Challenge of Poverty in India*, pp. 128-145.

11. See Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), III, 1879 ff.



Economic and social problems of development are sensitive *political* issues and there is an intimate relationship between economic performance and social change on the one hand, and the manipulations of political policy and leadership, on the other. Experience has shown that the distribution of national projects, like steel mills and fertiliser plants, generates competition and rivalries among the States. The imperatives of development often conflict with political expediency and there is a tendency to adopt a policy of appeasement by making large concessions to regional claims on political grounds that are often devoid of any economic rationale.

This situation shows the institutional framework in which the Plans have had to be implemented. If the Centre is not careful to balance fairness in distributing development finance and industrial projects with the hard realities of economic development, the political appeasement of regional leaders who vociferously demand the largest slice of the economic cake will retard the economic development of the entire country. Selig Harrison and Maurice Zinkin have noted that if economic realities are indiscriminately subordinated to political considerations, "though there may be more equality, or greater regional fairness, or possibly, fewer revolutions, there is also less development."<sup>12</sup>

From another point of view, social and economic development in India requires the politicisation of the inarticulate masses of people who are excluded from the benefits of progress. Industrialisation and the green Revolution have left the traditional patterns of social and economic stratification in India unchanged. The rich have become richer and they continue to monopolise educational opportunities and positions of power and influence. Gunnar Myrdal is of the view that the politicisation of the masses can force the elite groups to change the existing inegalitarian power structure. This power structure is perpetuated by various kinds of social indiscipline and corruption, making the country what Myrdal terms a "soft state". For example, we have a

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12. Maurice Zinkin quoted by Selig S. Harrison in *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 327.

sufficiently large body of legislation on agrarian reform, but implementation of the prescribed measures has either been delayed by vested interests or carried out in a selective manner so that it benefits the better-off farmers.<sup>13</sup> All developing countries are more or less "soft states" and perhaps one of the major contributions of voluntary organisations in our country could be the effort to make the masses aware of their rights so that their participation in the economic life of the country may act as a check on corruption and other forms of social indiscipline.

In this article what has been done is to outline broadly some of the major problems which the country encounters in the process of social and economic development. No attempt has been made to indicate the contribution which the Churches can make to economic development and social justice in India. The magnitude of the problem of poverty and unemployment makes it clear that the Churches can exercise only a marginal influence quantitatively, but there seems good reason to believe that they can help to create an environment of hope, of moral integrity and social dedication without which there can be no social progress in the country.

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13. For a very fine discussion of the effects of corruption and social indiscipline on planning and development, see Gunnar Myrdal, *The Challenge of World Poverty*, p. 211ff.

# Towards a Theology of Liberation

Development of nations and peoples long subjected to exploitation and sunk in poverty and their liberation from misery and ignorance are one of the primary tasks of Christianity which is the message of salvation to the whole man. Hence the problem of liberation and development should be examined from the angle of theology. *What is Theology?* Theology in the strictest sense is the science of *Theos* and *Logos*; it approaches the sublime mystery of the Divinity according to a strict method of procedure. It strives to arrive at a knowledge of the inner life of the Godhead on the one hand, and on the other, His self-manifestation in the Logos or Word, both the immanent Word of the Trinity and His created expression in the world of beings. But this vast expanse of the Divine self-manifestation shows that the human search for the Logos cannot remain purely on the theoretical level of Heraclitus, the Stoics or Philo. Through reflection that integrates the different sensoria of human experience the theologian strives to find out the meaning of human life in this world. This reflection necessarily includes an examination of the present-day human condition, and of the problem of the poverty, suffering and social inequities that engulf a great part of humanity. It is also a search for adequate means of saving the whole man, body and soul, and bringing him to total fulfilment.

Today theology has come of age and has shifted the emphasis from the salvation of one's individual soul to the communitarian level of social self-realization. The soul is not a mere part of man that he carries about with him; it stands for his whole reality, his total humanity. This humanity includes the humanity of other men also. Man is not pure soul either. He is spirit in matter. Hence theology should look for the divine meaning and purpose in the temporal aspects of human social existence as well. Even the most spiritual experiences of man

are rooted in his bodily existence and hence his spiritual liberation cannot be dissociated from his material and temporal liberation. It follows that a discussion of man's temporal liberation from poverty and misery and of his economic and socio-political development has a special place in theology. Such development is an integral part of the salvation of the whole man. God saves man according to his total nature. It is by establishing a kingdom of God here on earth that the Jerusalem on high is built up. Man's temporal liberation is not merely a condition for his spiritual liberation but an integral part of it. The Son of God became the son of man so that the divine sonship restored to all men might become manifest in the terrestrial community. The freedom enjoyed by the children of God on earth is a symbol of the complete freedom secured by the Redeemer for all men.

The theology of development and liberation has a special role to play in the orientation of the whole body of theology. Traditional theology has sometimes created the impression that it is a colourless and detached description of *Theos* and *Logos*, and of the great deeds of God for the benefit of man. Often it is forgotten that in this *Theos-Logos* drama man is one of the principal characters. It is the story of how the Word of God expresses Himself in the word of man, how God saves man through man, how God works out man's salvation in and through man's creative response to the call from God. This response of man has the temporal and socio-political sphere for a field of operation. Even the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, which are purely divine gifts to man become felt and expressed in human life through their corresponding moral virtues. Man is not a mere automaton pushed about by divine grace. Divine life conferred on man through Christ enables him to face courageously the problems of his terrestrial existence in human society. The theology of liberation and development, therefore, provides flesh and blood to the rest of theology so that it may come down from its academic abstraction and become relevant to the actual life of man. It is not reflection by a single individual. It is the pooling and sharing of experience by the members of the community. Hence theology is a group reflection on the Word of God made flesh in the ordinariness of the Church on earth.



## The challenge of secular Christianity

Christian theology was shaken out of its academic slumber by certain radical orientations which in reaction to the apparent inaction of the past, set up movements that placed a premium on relevance, actuality and action. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his *Letters from Prison* showed how irrelevant the prattle of traditional theologians was to the life of persecuted humanity in the prison camp. Not the niceties of abstract speculation on God, but Jesus crucified for the redemption of all men was the source of hope and consolation for suffering humanity. Basing themselves on the experience of Bonhoeffer several scholars have tried to draw a sharp division and contrast between the secular obligations of man today and the outdated and irrelevant tenets of traditional religion. Paul van Buren in his *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* proposes a sort of religionless Christianity, in which God, religion and the supernatural are rejected, even the divinity of Christ denied, but the historical human reality of Jesus of Nazareth made the model and inspiration for human life. Without going to such extremes Bishop J. A. T. Robinson, and Prof. Harvey Cox strongly contend that the religious task for those living in the secular city is in its streets and slums and not outside it. But they give the impression of isolating the secular city as a self-contained entity totally outside the sacred.

The theology of Hope proposed by Jurgen Moltman, J. B. Metz and others and drawing inspiration from the Marxist philosopher Ernest Bloch also seems to give overemphasis to the task of building a temporal future and, this it would appear, denies all supernatural eschatology. Utopia-building has been a fascinating pastime down the ages. Present scientific and technological endeavour is inspired by a Utopian vision of material plenty and well-being for everyone in the future. People like Herbert Marcuse challenged the validity of such expectations for an era of technological success, but at the same time proposed another kind of Utopia, namely one of passivity, the paradise of the counter-culture: Marcuse speaks of a non-repressive society in which expression will replace repression, work will be considered play, spontaneity will take the place of structure, and all

will live in concord.<sup>1</sup> This would mean a revolution, not a bloody one but a green revolution.<sup>2</sup>

What we find in all these emphatically secularist systems is "the product of a violent swing from one extreme to the other, from a position which is all about God and grace to one which is all about man and nature."<sup>3</sup> But all such secularist movements are self-defeating since seeking to liberate man from his material want they leave him a prisoner of this secular city with no hope of escape from it. Even the optimistic thinkers who tried to present the present condition of the underdeveloped countries as a necessary stage in their march towards full development and plenty have become disillusioned by the sight of large pockets of permanent poverty and misery in the so-called developed countries. Further, it has become clear that the underdevelopment and poverty in these pockets as well as in the underdeveloped countries is the side-effect of progress, to a great extent caused by the process of development in order to "increase the power of the mighty economic groups."<sup>4</sup> Hence even the title "theology of development" would appear to be objectionable in the actual situation. What is urgently needed today is liberation. Only a theology of liberation can face the situation squarely.<sup>5</sup>

The Church of Christ which stands for the salvation of all men and for the peace and harmony of all the world often acted unwittingly against the ideal of liberation. This happened on account of a supernaturalism which was preoccupied with the salvation of the soul of man to the exclusion of his body. An unrealistic and stagnant *status quo* was assumed to be a state of peace. The inner rottenness of an irremediable situation was sometimes covered up on account of a natural revulsion from a

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1. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation*.
  2. J. Reich, *Greening of America*
  3. E. L. Mascall, *The Secularisation of Christianity*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965, p. 120.
  4. G. G. Merino, "Notes for a Theology of Liberation", *Theological Studies* 31(1970)243-4.
  5. *Ibid*.

bloody revolution which, it seemed, would only worsen matters. Hence mediocrity and inadequate and shortsighted policies became the hall-mark of the Christian reformer. As Brian Wicker complains in his *Towards a Contemporary Christianity* the attitude of Church leaders seems to be that it is better to patch up matters from the outside than search out the root causes of a malady and cure it from within. The so-called Christian moderniser seemed to say: "Do not bother too much about the population explosion; the important thing is to bring St Augustine up-to-date by issuing thermometers and charts, to people and so relieve the immediate problems of sexual fulfilment in a starving world. Do not bother too much with a theology of the people of God as community; what matters is the reorganization of parish and diocesan life so that the pastoral priest can get on with his job of saving souls. Do not worry about whether there is any sense in the notion of a Christian education: let us get on with the job of improving the standards of the institutions we already have, and which have done such good service in the past."<sup>6</sup> Irrelevance is the most serious fault of the Church today. Even Vatican II, in spite of all the publicity it has had "has scarcely said anything which is really relevant to the modern agnostic in his intellectual and moral life."<sup>7</sup>

There is a danger that a purely intellectual approach to problems misses contact with actuality. As Herve Carrier S. J. (Rector of the Gregorian University, Rome) says, "intellectual awareness of the quasi-general poverty of the human race does not necessarily lead to an awakened conscience or an awakened sense of responsibility among those who would be in a position to apply remedies."<sup>8</sup> Only continuous contact with actuality and a full self-understanding by the Church of her own salvific mission can bring out the full implications of the Church's task in the modern world. Liberation is not merely the salvation of the individual soul irrespective of one's material condition, nor is

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6. Brian Wicker. *Towards a Contemporary Christianity*, Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1967. pp. 9-10.

7. *Ibid* p. 11.

8. Herve Carrier S. J. "How Will Cath. Univ. Confront World Development" *Gregorianum* 52 (1971) 5-25.

it merely the political liberation of oppressed peoples and social classes. It is primarily liberation of man, of the whole man and of every man, liberation "from sin as a condition of life of all men with the Lord." Socio-economic growth is not primarily a problem of material goods, finances or technology, but of total human salvation. Poverty and underdevelopment in any part of the world are a communitarian symptom of human sin. They in great part are due to the moral underdevelopment of those who are better off.<sup>10</sup>

### **Liberation as an aspect of the sacramental reality of the Church**

The miracles that Christ worked were the signs of the kingdom He came to establish on this earth. Healing the sick, raising the dead to life and feeding the poor through the multiplication of bread were not mere proofs of any abstract item of Divine revelation. They were the way in which the Kingdom of God encountered the world of humanity by responding to inmost aspirations and actual needs. The Church too is the sacrament of God's encounter with the whole man, taking his bodily and spiritual needs as an integral whole. Baptism is a sacrament of the Church because the cleansing of the body with water is tied up with the inner spiritual cleansing and regeneration of the recipient. Eucharist continues Christ's miracle of the multiplication of bread to welcome all without distinction to the family table of the Church. Confirmation is the consecration of the individual to the service of the community to minister to its temporal and spiritual needs. Similarly all the other sacraments are socio-spiritual signs by which the Church shows herself as the fullness of Christ continuing His work of liberating the whole man from need and suffering. The distinctive feature of the Church is this visible and social encounter with the men and situations of today, and through it the Divine Saviour is constantly active in His work of redemption. Hence a church that ignores its social tasks in the world of actuality under the pretext that she deals with purely spiritual matters is failing in

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9. G. G. Merino. *I.c.* pp. 142-143.

10. Herve Carrier S. J. *I.c.* p. 15.



her mission of setting free the sons and daughters of Abraham from the bonds in which they are tied.

## Church as the Reality of Liberation

But the Church is not merely an agent of liberation; she is also the very reality of that liberation to be achieved by all men. This fact has several implications that affect the image of the Church.

1. Church is not a mere charitable institution among others like the Red Cross Organization or the Ford Foundation. As Theodore Westow says, "Christianity is not something applied externally to our human condition like a medical bandage; but, it is something which transforms the human condition from within". Hence to proclaim the message of liberation the Church does not necessarily have to set up separate Catholic schools, hospitals, social service centres and the like by the side of similar secular institutions as if to compete with them and replace them. When the public agencies were not coming forward to render the services they do there was reason for ecclesiastical agencies to be pioneers and show the way. Once public authorities have begun to engage in them the task of the Church is to infuse those perfectly honest and efficient organizations with the spirit of Christ's love.

2. The Church is also the image of the freedom that all men are aspiring after. The sole reason for human existence is self-realization. Besides the struggle against poverty, misery and exploitation, Christians seek also the creation of a new man. The image of this self, the new man, is the one according to which "God chose us before the creation of the world" (Eph. 1, 3) in the First-born of all creation, Christ (Col. 1, 15-20). This is a communitarian image in which the community as a whole and the person as a totality are correlative. Theodore Westow boldly affirms that the individualism of the past six hundred years is a denial of Christianity, which "can be defined as the laying down

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11. Theodore Westow. "The Human Condition" in *Christians and World Freedom*, ed. L. Bright O. P. London; Sheed & Ward, 1966, pp. 41-42.

12. *Ibid.*

of one's whole life for mankind in Christ, so that it may rise again in glory." <sup>13</sup>

3. This also means that liberation cannot be described purely in terms of poverty or misery or even that of simple economic growth. Francois Houtart has shown, in a recent article, that in view of the gross exploitation of the developing nations by the developed the prospects for economic liberation are gloomy. But if one takes into account the spirit behind the political movement for national liberation there is a healthy sign that people are thinking of the human person as the central factor in all progress and development; the one thing worth liberating at all costs is the human person. Hence liberation in the fullest sense is the process for freeing man - for freedom from natural constraints, from social restrictions, from those barriers which man himself has erected by his personal and collective selfishness.<sup>14</sup> The first condition for liberation is that large masses of humanity living in mediocrity, subject to domination and exploitation by vested interests must be helped to regain their self-respect and self-reliance. The task of the Church is to foster this self-awareness in every section of humanity. What stands in the way of the Church's ministry of liberation is that those who represent the Church, especially the Religious, who have embraced evangelical poverty, have settled down to a "bourgeois acceptance of a comfortable and secure living."<sup>15</sup> This is a corporate sin against the spirit of poverty which the Church proclaims. The Church is the community of all men called to freedom in Christ. The sense of community in our times demands a feeling of belonging to the world community of the poor and oppressed. Full participation in world community is the forum in which the hope of resurrection and the appreciation of realities are held in tension.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, the traditional plea for the independence of the Church as an autonomous institution often hides an

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13. *Ibid* p. 17.

14. Francois Houtart. "Pour une problematique du developpement" *Eglise Vivante* 23 (1971) 87-111)

15. Thomas More CFX. "Religious, Partners for Justice and Peace" *Review for Religious* 30 (1971) 161-166.

16. *Ibid* p. 165.

over-reliance on finances and property, and a deeply rooted materialism which is a denial of faith in Divine Providence as well as a refusal to identify oneself with the world community living in poverty and insecurity.<sup>17</sup>

4. The Church, the living reality of liberation is, however, conditioned to a great extent by the course of history. The stuff of history is sociological. The sociological situation often shapes the theology of the age. The theology of the Reformation was promoted by the social revolution of Europe that preceded and accompanied it. The contemporary Western theological movement was shaped in the whirlpool of the Industrial and French revolutions. The Church has always to be a "pilgrim for God and liberty" and should leave aside allegiance to a bygone age and give itself to the world of freedom that is emerging.<sup>18</sup> For, "the complex pattern of social, cultural, political and economic relationships that make up the world in which we live also determines the shape, not only of the Church's mission to the world, but of the Church-in-mission itself." The message of liberation is intimately bound up with the actual problems faced by the Church, namely of war and violence, hunger, ignorance, justice, poverty, exploitation and oppression.<sup>19</sup>

### Conclusion: The Present Task

Thus the theology of liberation stands for the total reality of the mystery of salvation of the whole man. The Church as the enduring proclamation of the mystery of redemption should show forth this ideal of liberation. The Church is not a thing, a mere institution, but a movement, a project for the liberation of all peoples. Hence in India and in the whole underdeveloped world the Church should not try to borrow her self-image from abroad, from textbook definitions and outdated traditions. She has to

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17. Theodore Westow. "The Human Condition" *I.c.* p. 26.

18. Basil Winton C. S. Sp. "The Church yesterday, today and tomorrow" in *Christians and World Freedom*, *op. cit.* pp. 41-42.

19. Martin Redfern. "Freedom of Worship: intercommunion" in *Christians and World Freedom* p. 74.

create her own image by being the voice crying in the desert against exploitation and oppression. The Church has to be always the community of the proud children of God, who will never reconcile themselves to their actual condition of misery, ignorance and poverty. Only in this way can the Christian message get into the mainstream of the Indian religious tradition, which has always been a *muktimārga*, a way of liberation.

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# Human Well-Being on Earth and the Gospel of Jesus

We need a theology of man's earthly welfare. We need to ask and answer the question about the relationship between human well-being on earth and the salvation Jesus brings. Should the disciples of Jesus be concerned with food and clothing, railroads and steel-plants, entertainment, irrigation and research? Do the churches have to get involved in these things? Do such temporal, secular, material things belong inwardly to the Church's mission and the Kingdom of God? Is Jesus really interested in them, and do they fall within the range of his Gospel?

The question has become important and urgent for Jesus' disciples everywhere. There is, on the one hand, a general understanding of the Gospel as concerned mainly with ultimate salvation and going to heaven, and therefore as eschatological, other-worldly, inwardly, spiritual and liturgical. It is on this understanding, for instance, that the Church existed in India for centuries, with great interest in its own organization and worship, but, for all we know, with little concern about, or challenge to, social realities within it or around it such as the caste system or patterns of marriage or economic structures unless it be that the admission into the Church of low-caste and non-caste people amounted to a calling in question of the entire caste system. In the West, when Christians themselves came to engage in the slave-trade and employ slave-labour, the Church did not send into the field prophets to denounce and undermine the system, but saints to comfort the slave and prepare him for heaven. At the outbreak of capitalism, the Church strove to promote patience among the exploited labouring masses and held out to them a hope beyond the grave. But on the other hand, generally speaking the churches have never been wholly indifferent to man's hunger and disease. They have always been devoted to relief work and, in recent times, have entered the field of development. But this last move does not dove-tail neatly with traditional ideas and

attitudes, and so the churches are not yet quite at home in it. And when development and well-being are bound up with politics, the churches are not quite sure or clear about the role they should play.

Today, however, several factors converge to urge them to look more closely at the ground and meaning of their actual or possible commitment to human welfare. There is first the Marxist criticism that religion is blind to concrete human realities, and the Marxist emphasis on the earthly and the material to which millions of men have responded with a new sense of strength and hope. This fact has arrested the attention of religions which now have to reflect seriously on the place this world holds in any message of salvation. Secondly, there is the great fascination exercised on man's mind by the structure and behaviour of matter, its beauty, its possibilities and the promises it holds for the future of mankind as revealed in modern science. Religion has to take this new experience into account and respectfully delve into the truth that underlies it. Thirdly, the emphasis has shifted, both in society and in religion, from systems, mental constructions and institutions, to the human person and to personal relationships. The revolutionary principle of Jesus that the Sabbath is for man and not the other way round, is vindicating itself and becoming a working principle of everyday life. Within this new (or old) perspective the condition of man here and now becomes a central concern for religion as well as for society. In the fourth place, a great deal of attention has been newly paid to the significance of the coming of God's Son to live on earth (the Incarnation) and to his bodily presence within human history today (the Resurrection); and this has balanced the theology of the Cross which has had a tendency to be negative in regard to earthly values. Fifthly, there are the hunger and need of two-thirds of mankind, who are no longer resigned to to their lot but aspire and strive impatiently after a style of life that would correspond to the dignity and the rights religion itself teaches are theirs. Both the suffering and the striving are massive facts which no living religion can overlook. The Gospel has to seek for its meaning before God. India, for instance, with her low per capita income, low life-expectancy, high birth-rate and high proportion of illiteracy and unemployment, is mobilising and concentrating all her resources and attention on

programmes of development. In such a context the churches in India cannot remain humanly relevant or retain any credibility if they neglect to ask themselves what role they as churches are to play in this gigantic national effort.

There is one more, a sixth reason, which puts pressure upon the Indian churches in particular to pose the question of the relation between temporal welfare and salvation according to the Gospel and to make up their minds as to the nature and extent of their participation in the national effort. We must explain this point at some length.

## II

With the coming of Western education and the wide diffusion of the Gospel in languages the people could understand, Hinduism felt itself challenged, and hastened to reform and revitalize itself. The process has gone on for a century and a half. One remarkable fact about it is that the religious challenge was felt not directly and mainly in the sphere of fundamental doctrine, spiritual life, prayer or worship, but in the social sphere and in the area of human values. Religious revival often worked through and within social reform and political action. The reformers saw clearly that it was in the realm of social life and human concerns that Hinduism suffered most by comparison with the Christian tradition it had encountered. They felt vaguely but powerfully that there was some deep bond between the religious and the social. And as a consequence the social problem loomed large within the movement of their religious renaissance.

Rām Mōhan Roy's (1772-1833) preoccupation with the purity of religion led him to devote a great deal of his time and effort to problems that have also a social bearing, such as caste, widow-burning and polygamy. A little later Keśub Candra Sen (1838-1884), influenced much more by Jesus and his message than Roy had been, placed the social problem in the frontline of his religious reform, and took a stronger stand on the emancipation of women, the education of girls, remarriage of widows and against child marriage. It was at least implicitly felt that no purification of religion was possible in total isolation from the conditions of human existence on earth; religion was a

special way of living our life here rather than a particular department that could be walled off and viewed apart.

From Bengal one can pass on to Bombay to find there too, in the person of M. G. Ranade (1842-1901) and the people of the Prārthana Samāj, the same combined concern for religion and society. In Gujarat and N.W. India we find it in the movement of Dayānanda Saraswatī (1824-1883) and the writings of Narmad (1860). In the South, there was Muddana in the Kannada-speaking area and Nārāyaṇa Guru in Kerala who viewed reform of religion and renewal of society as closely connected and interacting. Mohan Sēnāpati represents this movement in Orissa, and Hēmacandra Bārua (1833-1898) in Assam.

Thus the consciousness of the temporal dimensions and social links of religion was widespread in India in the nineteenth century. A new impetus came to this movement from Vivekānanda (1862-1902) whose passionate love for Hinduism expressed itself, first, in an effort to shake the nation out of a mood of dejection and lethargy and liberate it into confident creative action, with the Gītā cry, *Uttiṣṭha Bhārata* (Bhārat, arise!), and secondly, in the founding of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission (1893), meant explicitly for what we would call a religion-based liberation-development action. But it was in Gandhiji that the movement came to a culmination. He was, first and foremost, a mystic preoccupied with Truth and Non-Violence, and a reformer of the Hindu religion. How radical a religious reformer he was, and what a threat to Hindu orthodoxy, was best realized by the group that engineered his murder. But his commitment to Truth and Non-Violence led him directly, in the name of his religious beliefs, into socio political activity, for Truth had to be realized and lived concretely, socially. Truth and love could not be indifferent to the lie of unfreedom, to the violence of colonialism, and to the degradation these things meant both for the oppressor and the oppressed. The struggle for India's liberation from untouchability and from foreign domination were an essential part of Gandhiji's loyalty to God and to Truth.

This search for synthesis and integration, which is not entirely new to Hindu tradition, has become in some way the heritage of the nation. The Republic of India is a secular state,



but has for its National Anthem a prayer addressed to God, the Ruler and Guide of the minds of men and the Shaper of India's destiny. India's Five Year Plans are conceived in terms of the integral development of man, material and spiritual. Here is a passage from the Second Five Year Plan: "A society which has to devote the bulk of its working force or its working hours to the production of the bare wherewithals of life is to that extent limited in its pursuit of higher ends. Economic development is intended to expand the community's productive power and to provide the environment in which there is scope for expression and application of diverse faculties and urges." Equally a matter of integral development are the nation's educational programmes: "Modernization aims, amongst other things, at creating an economy of plenty which will offer to every individual a larger way of life and a wider variety of choices. While this freedom to choose has its own advantages, it also means that the future of society will depend increasingly upon the type of choice each individual makes. This would naturally depend upon his motivation and sense of values, for he might make the choice either with reference entirely to his own personal satisfaction or in a spirit of service to the community and to further the common good. The expanding knowledge and the growing power which it places at the disposal of modern society must, therefore, be combined with the strengthening and deepening of the sense of the social responsibility and a keener appreciation of moral and spiritual values." (*Report of the Education Commission 1964-66*, Ministry of Education, Government of India, p. 19) It is in such a context that the Church in India stands today and seeks to understand afresh, in concrete practical terms, the relationship between India's welfare and the Gospel of the Incarnate Son of God.

### III

It is perhaps possible to argue that Jesus had little or no interest in man's earthly welfare. He did not give a moment's thought to the question of his people's liberation from Roman domination. He rather directed men to be submissive and give to Caesar what was Caesar's. Men sought to make Jesus king. With his powers of leadership, his qualities of mind and heart, and his mastery of the word and the parable, he could, as king,

have worked wonders for his people. But he declined the offer and threw away golden opportunities of benefiting men in this way, of renewing the Davidic era and establishing the long awaited millennium. About slavery which was rampant in the Mediterranean world of his day, Jesus did not say a word. One of his disciples, Paul, instructs slaves to continue obediently in slavery. Jesus discussed no social problems, proposed no programmes for transformation of structures or for raising standards of life. The most he recommended was relief work and almsgiving. For the rest He inculcated patience and self-abnegation; and the hope He held out for justice and well-being pointed to Heaven. Blessed are the poor, blessed the hungry, and those who have to live in tears. Blessed are those who take persecution and exploitation meekly. They will get a great reward in heaven. For after all what does it profit one to gain the world and lose one's soul? Do not therefore worry about food or clothing, and take no thought for the morrow. God who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers will look after you. Let people beat you and rob you: show the other cheek too, and let go both shawl and shirt. To crown all this, Jesus let himself be stripped and murdered, though he had other possibilities and he knew that he did. His kingdom was not of this world. His hopes were centred on what lay beyond the grave. His disciples were told to make their own the same eschatological outlook. They were to take up their cross and follow Him, and not to seek to resist evil, but to rejoice when they were oppressed, remembering that they had no permanent city here. The married were to live as if they were not married, the weeping as if they did not weep, and the trader as if there was no trade, for the shape and form of this world is transient.

Clearly the perspective here is far from being that of liberation-development. But surely there is another side to the Gospel. There are other words and deeds of Jesus which lay upon His disciples the joy and the privilege of working for the growth of man. The disciples who, to spare themselves trouble, suggested that the hungry people be sent away to fend for themselves were ordered by Jesus to feed the crowd who might otherwise faint on the way. What Jesus sought to do was to lift the people out of difficult situations and put them on their feet so that, free and strong, they could go their way. Similar was His concern at

the pool of Bethsaida about the man who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years, and about Simon's mother-in-law. He freed men from the control of demons. There were times when his hands and days were so full with the activity of liberating and rebuilding men that he could not get time to eat a meal. What Jesus did was but a beginning and a parable; it is for us a lesson, an example and a commandment. We are to continue his work, and today it is entire societies that need to be lifted up, and whole political systems and economic situations that have to be exercised and healed.

The transformation of society requires the release, at the same time, of men's souls from taboos, traditions and fears, which serve only to constrict the spirit, pin down its élan and snub its creative powers. Jesus' well-thought-out plan in this field brought Him into sharp conflict with religious narrowness and the religious establishment. With calculated precision he undermined the most ancient and sacred traditions, the Sabbath law, for instance, which loomed large in the Jewish system and constituted the heaviest of fetters on the soul and the trickiest of snares. On a Sabbath day, in the community-hall, among the people assembled to hear the word and to pray, there was a man with a withered hand. He had not come seeking a cure, nor did he ask for it. But Jesus must make men free – not only this man with his physical handicap, but the community with its spiritual enslavement. Jesus must call the man up, stand him in the middle of the hall, and throw out a challenge to the guardians, interpreters and leaders of religion. Was it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Was it lawful to do what was good for man? There was no answer. It was a cunning silence, and Jesus' eyes went red with anger. He healed the man then and there. The 'religious' men and politicians immediately met outside and planned to destroy Jesus. One could ask whether Jesus should not have been a little more prudent, and healed the man a few hours later after the Sabbath rest or on the next day. Jesus would counter this with the question why, and in favour of what, He should postpone man and his welfare even for a brief hour. Here then was another symbolic, seminal action of Jesus' meant to explode in history and release a chain-reaction of total human liberation, for which His Church is to be a medium and catalyst.

The Gospels have preserved for us, significantly enough, more than one account of Jesus' breach of the Sabbath law, his defence of the violation of it by the disciples, and His re-interpretation of its meaning. Jesus took care also to go against other venerable traditions of His people. His action can only be described as subversive, calculated to shake and ultimately to shatter oppressive structures and narrow views, out of which he sought to lead human existence into God's large freedom. He overstepped accepted decencies; He associated with publicans and with those described by holy people as sinners, visited their homes and ate with them. The holy people grumbled. Why does he do such things, they asked his disciples. Jesus surprised the Samaritan woman by doing what no Jew should do. Even his disciples were nearly scandalized that in solitude he spoke to a woman. It is recorded that his disciples ate with unwashed hands, to the indignation of the Pharisees. These probably knew that the disciples were merely following their Master's example. The question, therefore, was directed to Jesus himself: "Why do your followers violate the tradition of the Fathers?" In every such case of question and criticism Jesus' answer came like a fresh breeze, blowing doors open and clearing the air (see Lk. 19. 1-10; Mk. 2. 15-17; Lk. 5. 29-32; Mt. 9. 10-13; Jn. 4. 9, 27; Mk. 7. 1-23; Mt. 15. 1-9; Acts 21. 21).

The Gospels record three events of miraculous provision of bread, fish and wine. The abundance of the provision is no less remarkable than the fact of it. This, together with the prayer Jesus puts on our lips for daily bread. His endless concern for man's health and freedom from all demonic powers, and his *a fortiori* argument from the flower which God adorns, goes to show that the Gospel perspective for life on earth is by no means one of strict parsimony and subsistence level (Lk. 5. 1-11; Mt. 14. 13-21; Jn. 2. 1-11).

The scope of the Gospel is well illustrated in the story of Zachaeus. Jesus liberates this man from the untouchability rules of his religious world. It was perhaps this social ostracism that dwarfed the man's spirit and drove him to seek compensation in exploitation of men and worship of wealth. Jesus would release him also from this spiritual shrinking and help him to grow to a new vision of life and new dimensions of human and social



existence. With a fresh sense of responsibility to which Jesus led him, this man would now do his utmost to heal the wounds of society to which he himself had perhaps contributed. He would do more; he would put a great part of his wealth into programmes that could benefit the down-trodden and make for their freedom from poverty and for a fuller life on earth. So Jesus said, salvation had come to this man's house (Lk. 19. 1-10).

Salvation was not only experienced in Zachaeus' heart, but was expressed in socio-economic terms. Salvation does not lie merely in the future and beyond the grave, in some distant land to which one "goes" after death. It is present in God in Jesus Christ. It consists in life's right relationship with God, in man's living in God's friendship. Salvation is, of course, eschatological, but the *eschaton* is already here with us in the Risen Jesus. "The hour is coming and is now." Those who hear and believe in the Son of Man have already passed out of death into life. Bliss is but the fullness of this grace and friendship of God. His friendship seeks to embrace and heal all the areas of human existence including the political and the socio-economic. The Gospel would transform them into friendly activities for the well-being of man, whom God loves. In that sense there is an entire Gospel economics. According to it, wealth, which historically has become "the Mammon of iniquity", can be redeemed by being made a medium of friendship and fraternity. Wealth and bread are not for grabbing but sharing as a great sacrament of brotherhood. Therefore upon the unbrotherly, unshared, selfish possession of wealth, even when it is legally not ill-gotten, there rests a judgement of God. The point of the story of the Rich Dining Man is not that the hungry have comfort beyond the grave, but that here and now men should listen to prophetic voices and the demands of the Gospel for a brotherhood realized and lived out within the concrete social, political and economic dimensions of existence. (Jn. 5. 24-25; 4. 23; Lk. 16. 1-12; Mt. 5. 42; 16. 19-31).

True, economics and politics, food and clothing, are not the ultimate realities. The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And Jesus' miracles are but signs. They are surely signs and sacraments of God's love for man, and are, for that very reason, important in

the perspective of Jesus' Gospel. Jesus Himself is the sacrament of God, the Bible, the sacrament of his Word, the Church, the sacrament of our fellowship in the Spirit, and the 'seven signs', the sacraments of Jesus' presence and action in the world. Our entire Christian and human situation is sacramental in character. It is in and through material things that we reveal and give ourselves to one another, and God reveals and gives Himself to us. Bread is a sacrament of God's love and must become a sacrament of our thanksgiving. The abundance that marks Jesus' miracles and God's creation is the only adequate sign of the super-abundance of their Grace. We want well-being to abound so that thanksgiving may abound. Without bread there can be no Eucharist; in the bosom of the hungry family and in the midst of an unfree and shrunken spirit there is no felt sign of God's presence and concern, and therefore no human ground for thanksgiving to spring from. Food and drink then, and freedom and opportunities for creative life, are part of the justice, peace and joy the Holy Spirit gives. (Rom. 14. 17; Gen. 1 and 2; II Cor. 9).

That is why salvation does not occur in an etherealisation or spiritualisation of man, but in the Incarnation of God's Son. Man is not taken out of the world, but Jesus is sent into the world. We are saved by His living out our life in full from birth to death in this world in God. The Incarnation is God's reaffirmation in tenderness of the world He made in the power of love, and a reaffirmation in mercy of the human existence He had set within the world. Work for human well-being will correspond to this divine 'Yes' to the world. It will be our way of making our own, gratefully, this gift of God, and our way of affirming Him who affirms the world and us.

But was not all that was affirmed and built up in the Incarnation broken down and cancelled out in Jesus' death on the Cross? It was in a certain sense: in the sense of the seed being broken down to release the life and realize the harvest that lie dormant within. This only means that earthly existence is subject to development and that human welfare has a future into which God can lead it. But, on the other hand, too exclusive an emphasis could not be laid on the negative aspect and the weakness of the Cross. We would do well to dwell occasionally on

the meaning of the loud cry (recorded by all the synoptic writers) with which Jesus died. There is something strong about His death. There is of course the triumph over sin and satan; but there is, in particular, a powerful affirmation of the human. Jesus was there on the cross because He had declined merely to be a conformist, and a thing that fits into a system and lets itself be used. He rather chose to be a Man, unafraid and free: free to love, and to be loyal to His conscience and to His God, free to honour men, to think His own thoughts, to call in question accepted and established concepts and values, to speak out the truth and live or die with dignity. He refused to succumb to attempts made by a loving family, by unbelieving relatives, enthusiastic crowds or angry and scheming foes, to distract Him, lead him astray or bend or break Him. Ridicule and challenge followed Him to the end and to Calvary. "Come down from the Cross, if you are the Messiah; save yourself and us, you who destroy and rebuild the temple." But if Jesus had ever been in a mood to oblige scoffers and pious users of religion he would not have been there on the Cross at all. He had His own reasons for being there and He preferred to die in an irresistible affirmation of the manhood of man and his freedom to live and die for other men and for God. The picture of the 'pale Galilean' is not true to facts as we know them. The Cross, therefore, which he asks his disciples to carry is not a recommendation of passivity and feebleness. It is the manly suffering, like His own, native to the conflict that is inevitable if man begins to love and live for others; the conflict that is inherent in any firm stand taken for justice, dignity and freedom for the common man. With Jesus abnegation is not starvation but selfless action. (Jn. 12. 24; Mk. 3. 21-22; Jn 7. 1-9; Mt. 4; Mk. 8. 31-33)

#### IV

The clearest and warmest light on the relationship between man's earthly welfare and the Gospel of Jesus falls perhaps from what constitutes the heart of the Gospel, namely love. The substance of the divine disclosure is that God loves men and is here on earth in Jesus in order to free, build up and befriend them; that therefore men must love one another even as God in Jesus has done. Love is concerned not so much with concepts and categories of eternal and temporal or spiritual and material,

but with the person who is loved, with his concrete needs and possibilities. Love consists in working to meet needs and in helping to realize possibilities. It consists in seeking thus to make the other person great. Man's needs range from food to the glory of God. Where men are hungry and unfree and exploited in many ways, Gospel love would mean action to free them and feed them. When a man is found lying on the roadside, robbed, stripped and wounded love would consist in binding up his wounds and bringing him to an inn where he will be cared for. Today it would consist in ridding the land of robbers and exploiters and making the roads safe. If love for one another is the substance in practice of Jesus' revelation, as the entire New Testament seems to teach, then man's well-being in all its forms, hence also his earthly welfare, belongs inwardly to the Gospel of Jesus. (Jn 13 17; 3. 16; I Jn 4; 2 C 5. 17-21; Mt 5; Lk 10. 25-37)

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# Christianity and India's Development

## I. What is development?

Development may be defined as the humanization of man through the humanization of 'nature'. By 'nature' we mean not only material nature and its resources but also the complex of those objective conditions *given* at any particular stage of history. These conditions may be economic, social, political, ethical or religious. The integral development of man demands the humanization of all these conditions in such a manner that he is enabled to unfold all his possibilities and aspirations in a harmonious manner. But development may also be understood in a narrower sense to mean the humanization of man through the humanization of his socio-economic conditions. Understood thus it comprises not merely a quantitative increase in the production and consumption of goods and services, but also, and above all, a qualitative improvement in the network of human relationships within which production, distribution and consumption take place and in the type of man that emerges. It is in this narrower sense that the word is taken in this paper. We shall therefore deal with cultural, political and other aspects of societal life only in so far as they have a direct bearing on economic development.

The crucial word in our definition of development is 'humanization.' In respect of the *world* man creates through work, it means the incorporation of his intelligence, of his rationality, in the material things around him and in the socio-economic structures into which he is inserted. In respect of *man* who fashions his world, it means the progressive maturation of the human in him. And the 'human' in him consists above all in his transcendence, i.e. in his capacity to be what he is not, and not to be what he is. But what is the content of this self-transcendence. It can be nothing other than the realization of values like creativity, equality, justice, love and fraternity,

the quest after which is an integral element of man's global experience. Self-transcendence in freedom implies further that no set socio-economic conditions, however perfect, can adequately express the fulness of man. No sooner has he created new conditions of life than these evoke in him new and more complex needs, the satisfaction of which calls for a further transformation of them. Besides, every socio-economic system he brings into being is likely to create in its turn fresh forms of alienation, which can be overcome only through further changes, whether superficial or radical, in society. Development therefore is not a goal, an optimum to be attained, but essentially a *process*, an unending quest in search of the ever-widening horizon of the humanly possible. In this sense all nations are developing, and no nation is developed. The distinction between the developed and the developing nations is valid only where development is viewed in terms of 'having' and not of 'being.'

When, in the light of the above reflections, we assess the situation of any particular country, either of the following possibilities is likely to present itself. It may happen that the social system of the country in question is basically sound and needs nothing more than minor reforms to remedy functional imbalances and inadequacies. Or it may be the case that the existing system is essentially unjust and calls for radical and rapid transformation. In the first case development can be achieved through planned evolution; in the second case it is possible only through a revolution. Even a rapid glance at the Indian situation will show that here nothing less than a revolution can ensure socio-economic development.

## II. Structures of Unfreedom

The evils of underdevelopment in India are obvious to anyone who cares to see: the denial of even the minimum means of subsistence to millions, the appalling poverty and misery of the masses, the ravages wrought by under-nourishment, diseases and premature senility, the extent of infant mortality, the growth of underemployment and unemployment, and the exclusion of vast sections of the population from a share in the goods of civilization and culture. But to grasp the extent of the dehumanization these imply, it is necessary to go deeper and reflect on

the system that produces them, and, above all, on the man who creates and is created by the system. In other words we should try "to grasp things by the root. But for man the root is man himself." (Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, trans. T. B. Bottomore, London, 1963, p. 52). The socio-economic system existing today is such that man is enslaved by the world of things, by his fellowmen and finally, by the State itself.

### I. Man and Material Nature

The vast majority of the Indian people belong to the working classes, whether agricultural or industrial, salaried or self-employed. In one way or other they are engaged in the tasks of producing goods and services to meet the varied needs of society, like food, clothing, housing, roads and means of communication. In doing so they are remoulding nature in their own image, incorporating their mind and spirit in the world of objects, and thereby extending their personal existence in time and space. The goods we see around us, the products of civilization available in the market, are the concretization of their toil, the solidification of their being and willing. If this is so, it is but natural that these goods should belong to them in reasonable abundance. What happens in fact is the opposite. About eighty per cent of the rural population, which in turn forms eighty-two per cent of the total population of the country, are living on a meagre per capita income of seventy paise per day (*The National Sample Survey*, 1969). This has to be viewed against the steep rise in prices during the last twenty years. With such a paltry income the working classes cannot buy even a fraction of the goods they produce in the sweat of their brow.

The producer is thus deprived of his product. Those who construct palatial homes for the privileged minority live in miserable huts. Those who produce various types of sophisticated foods (Amul milk powder, Lactogen, Horlicks!) cannot afford even one full meal a day. Those who produce beautiful sarrees have to be content to see their daughters going about in tattered rags. Those who produce cars and scooters are unable to have them. Those who produce works of beauty are doomed to live in absolute dirt and squalor. Those who work on the land and

raise crops are often not the ones who own them. Those who produce costly antibiotics have often to be satisfied with less effective remedies when they themselves fall ill. Those who through their labour put up mighty buildings for colleges, institutes of science and universities, are given only a marginal share in the services provided in them.

If the working classes are denied the fruits of their labour, to whom do these accrue? To the privileged classes. A third of the entire national income is appropriated by the richer ten per cent of the population (*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Nov. 9, 1969, p. 11). Much of our industrial production is geared to the consumption of the upper or middle classes. Every day the market is flooded with more and more sophisticated luxury goods; cosmetics, various brands of foreign liquors and cigarettes, etc., which only a small minority can afford to buy, while the large majority lack even the necessities of life. One therefore is faced with the conclusion that the present economic system is such as enables the rich minority to exploit the labour of the majority for the production of goods which they alone can consume.

Deeper than the alienation of the product from the producer is the alienation he experiences in the very process of work. For the toiling masses in India work is nothing but a process of self-alienation, or to use a Marxian phrase, of 'spiritual self-castration'. Far from being the act of self-realization, work is for the vast majority the prostitution of their physical and spiritual powers for the benefit of the privileged classes. Day in and day out the labourer sells his work, or rather, his capacity for work, to the employer for a salary that is scarcely enough to keep his body and soul together. During the hours of work he belongs not to himself but to the employer. In other words, he is not a man insofar as he is a worker; and insofar as he is a man he is not a worker. He can have dominion over himself – and that is what constitutes the human – only outside the hours of work. Thus work which ought to be an end in itself becomes only a means to an end, the end being a few coins. Since work is the essence of man, this implies that man himself is reduced to the position of a means. If so, it is clear that the system of salaried labour as it exists in India is essentially dehumanizing. Even if we were to accept it as provi-



sionally valid, still we have to question the criterion of assessing remuneration. The criterion currently used is not that of the contribution one makes to society. It is derived from the bourgeois conception of the superiority of intellectual over manual labour. Thus while an executive is paid a salary of, say, Rs. 2,000 a month, a municipal scavenger is paid around Rs 150, though the service rendered by the latter is as essential to society as that rendered by the former.

The supreme expression of the alienation of the labouring masses consists in this; that these have no control over the economic system, no say in the matter of shaping their own economic future. It is not the workers that decide what they should produce, how they should produce it and how the products have to be distributed. The prices even of essential commodities are determined either by the arbitrary decisions of commercial exploiters or by the impersonal law of supply and demand. This means that the working classes are degraded to mere bye-products of history, whereas in justice they should be its subject and creators.

The above analysis shows that the present system of production, distribution and consumption is such as to keep the working classes of India in a permanent state of material and spiritual underdevelopment. But behind this system stand the exploiting classes. A brief survey of them would be in order here.

## **2. Man and Society**

The privileged classes who benefit from the existing socio-economic system are of two types: one originating from feudal society, and the other, created by the capitalistic system imported by the colonisers.

### **(i) The dominant castes**

The modernization of India through industrialization and western types of education led to the breakdown of the vertical solidarity proper to caste. The lower castes broke loose from the domination of the ritually superior castes. At the same time modernization contributed to the birth of a new form of

cohesion based on horizontal solidarity among sub-castes sharing a common culture. This, along with universal suffrage, invested the numerically dominant castes with tremendous social and political power over the numerically inferior castes. Among such dominant castes are the Nairs of Kerala, the Gounders, Padayachis and Mudaliars of Tamil Nadu, the Lingayats and the Okkaligas of Mysore, the Marathas of Maharashtra, the Patidars of Gujarat, the Rajputs, Jats and Ahirs of North India (M. N. Srinivas, *Caste in Modern India and other Essays*, Asia Publishing House, Reprint, 1964, p. 90). These have a vested interest in keeping the lower castes and the outcastes in their present economic backwardness. "The dominant castes are fighting hard to retain the the privilege of being classified as backward classes. The low castes and the Harijans are becoming increasingly aware of what is happening. They are finding that the lion's share of the jobs, scholarships, seats and free student-ships reserved for the backward castes are going to members of the dominant castes" (*ibid.* p. 93). In this context we may also mention the rural élite which has inherited the tradition of the earlier Jannas and Zemindars. Though not necessarily belonging to the dominant castes, they are, in many ways, exploiting the rural population. They control most of the panchayats which offer them opportunities for political office and patronage (Gunnar Myrdal, *The Asian Drama*, New York, 1968, Vol. 1, p. 293). They are devouring much of the government assistance made available to the backward classes through community development, co-operative farming, etc. (*ibid.* p. 286).

## (ii) The modern bourgeoisie

To this category belong the industrial, commercial and professional élite. They embody the ideology of private interest, competition and of the survival of the fittest. In many parts of the country it looks as if they have entered into a tacit alliance with the rural élite on the one hand and with the bureaucrats and politicians, on the other. This middle-class axis controls much of the national press, and to some extent, even the police, if not the judiciary. The big industrialists have succeeded in concentrating excessive economic and political power in their hands. The report of the Mahalanobis Committee, 1964, has admitted that "the working of the planned economy has contributed to the growth of big companies in Indian industry".

### 3. Man and State

If the dominant castes, the rural élite and the modern bourgeoisie have been able to maintain and strengthen their privileged position in the country it is in part due to the fact that they have found a willing accomplice in the State itself. Although, with the introduction of universal suffrage and democratic elections, power passed into the hands of the people at large, in practice it is concentrated heavily in the middle classes. The educated middle class formed the backbone of the ruling party even in pre-Independence days. However, this middle class had one thing in its favour, namely, that it was pre-dominantly urban, and had assimilated, in varying degrees, the principles of socialism. But today the rural élite, which did not grow up in the tradition of socialism, are playing an ever-growing role in the affairs of the ruling party. They obstruct the framing as well as the implementation of progressive social legislation. What is worse, even when the government opts for bold socio-economic reforms, its efforts are frustrated by the concerted resistance of the emerging bourgeoisie. The situation is further aggravated by the conservatism of the bureaucracy. The latter is fast growing into a gigantic tumor in the body politic that eats up a good part of the revenue. For instance the bureaucracy in Kerala which constitutes only 1.5 per cent of the population is devouring 70 per cent of the state revenue. The members of this class are the secular version of the Brahmins of yesterday, and have all rights and few obligations as against the people who have all obligations and few rights (Gunnar Myrdal, *op. cit.* pp. 262-275). The collusion between the politicians and the bureaucrats on the one hand, and the neo-feudal and the bourgeois élite on the other, has made a farce of democracy itself, which is by and large the government of the privileged classes for the privileged classes.

We have thus far analysed some of the economic, social and political structures that enslave the masses of India and keep them in a state of economic misery and stagnation. They find a favourable soil in the system of ideas and values prevalent among the élite as well as the masses.

### III. The Tyranny of Ideology

It is clear from the preceding analysis that both feudal and capitalistic structures exist side by side in contemporary India. Correspondingly we find also a coexistence of feudal and capitalistic ideas and values among the people. Leaving aside the ideology of capitalism, we shall briefly indicate some of the intellectual and attitudinal vestiges of feudalism, which prevent India's march to socialism.

The traditional spiritualistic conception of religion as the way of liberation from the historical conditions of human existence cannot inspire commitment to the creation of a better social order within the pale of history. Besides, religion has for long been divorced from ethics (P. D. Devanandan, *Christian Concern in Hinduism*, p. 46). This makes it possible for persons to be excessively scrupulous in religious matters and at the same time unconcerned about moral values especially in social life. Similarly, undue stress on individual salvation has eclipsed all ideas of collective salvation and of universal human solidarity. It has prevented the emergence of a truly social humanism which alone could provide an adequate basis for a socialistic society. We may also mention here the theocratic conception of the world, which views the existing social order as willed by the gods, and the attitude of fatalism and resignation created by the belief in *karma* and *samāsāra*, all of which act as a brake on social revolution. Coming to the domain of ethics we find again the same individualism as was noticed at the level of religiosity. The stress is mainly on personal virtues like austerity, self-control, detachment and chastity, and only marginally on one's social obligations (Swami Nikhilananda, in the *Indian Mind*, ed. C. A. Moore, Honolulu, pp. 238-240). Paradoxically, individualism in ethics grew within the framework of the collectivism of the joint family, caste and village economy. The authoritarianism of these traditional structures did not favour the development of personal responsibility and decision. At the level of social consciousness there still exists the hierarchically ordered society based on status rather than on function. Consequently the social inequalities existing today go unquestioned. No less entrenched in the minds of people is parochialism. Loyalty to limited groups like the family and the caste, takes precedence over loyalty to society as a



community of persons. This has led some Indians to entertain the extreme view that "the traditional Hindu mind is incapable of feeling a civic responsibility or wider secular loyalties for any length of time beyond its own kinship group." (A. B. Shah, in his introduction to *Tradition and Modernity in India*, ed. A. B. Shah and C. R. M. Rao., Bombay, 1965, p. 11) Finally the occupational stratification inherent in caste is at the root of the prevailing contempt for manual labour and the search for white-collar jobs.

#### IV. The Challenge of Revolution

Our reflections thus far lead us to the conclusion that nothing less than a structural transformation can create the conditions necessary for economic development in India. Further, the structural change envisaged here has also to be rapid. To resign oneself to the present pace of development would amount to condemning generations of men, women and children to a sub-human mode of existence and to premature death. And a radical and rapid transformation of the social system is precisely what we understand by revolution. Hence the world revolution sums up the challenge of the hour. Such a revolution must be fought on two fronts: on that of socio-economic structures and on that of ideas and attitudes. In other words, the country needs both a structural and mental revolution. These two are not to be thought of either as consecutive phases of the global process of social reconstruction or as running parallel to each other. They are complementary and dialectically interrelated. A revolution of structures is ineffective without a corresponding change in the ideas and attitudes of people. Likewise, it is not possible to bring about a mental and moral revolution without the transformation of socio-economic structures. It is in overthrowing the structures of unfreedom and exploitation that the masses will rid themselves of the feudal and capitalistic ideology and assimilate the values proper to socialism.

Social revolution understood thus is today an objective need. And it is increasingly becoming also a subjective need, i. e. a need felt by the oppressed classes and by the intelligentsia among the youth. The prevailing mood in the country has been aptly expressed by a Marxist intellectual in the following terms:

"The growing economic disparity, the gap between the real income and its purchasing power, the rise in prices, food scarcity, corruption, and blackmarketing, the growing hardships of the people, the failure of the men in power to bring about radical changes in the social structure and lead the country to the avowed objective of socialism — these have evoked moral and spiritual crisis and a sense of helplessness, frustration, despair and cynicism, as also of anger, indignation and revolt." (K. Damodaran, *Indian Thought, A Critical Survey*, 1967, p. 480). It is this frustration and anger that are finding an outlet today in violence and in the destructive instability pervading the country. To all appearances the country seems to be heading towards chaos and disintegration.

This is the context in which we should study the role of Christianity in India. I have elsewhere tried to show the theological basis of Christian commitment to development ("Christian Participation in Social Work" in *Review for Religious*, Vol. 28, No. 4 July 1969 and "Le rôle de l'Église dans le développement national de l'Inde", in *Études*, April 1969) and to social revolution ("The Christian and the Call to Revolution", in *Jeevadhara*, January-February, 1971). My aim in what follows is limited, namely, to indicate the forces of reaction in Indian Christianity and also to suggest some guidelines which might be of use in orienting Christian commitment in future.

## V. Indian Christianity — A Reactionary Force

Christianity has played an ambivalent role with regard to the socio-economic reconstruction of India. It has indirectly sown the seeds of social revolution (i) by creating through its educational services an élite which is capable of giving articulate expression to the mute aspirations of the masses; (ii) by heralding a new humanism based on the dignity of the human person and the equality of all men; (iii) by bearing witness to the truth that authentic religiousness expresses itself in service to one's fellow-men; (iv) thereby inspiring the Hindus to launch similar projects for the welfare of the masses. It has thus played a significant role in helping India pass from feudalism to modernity. But the problem facing India today is a different one, namely, that of passing from the vestiges of feudalism and from the modernity

of the capitalistic type to true socialism. In respect of the new challenge Christianity in India acts less as a catalyst of change than as a defender of the *status quo*, and this both at the level of theory (a blanket term meaning beliefs, ideas and attitudes) and of practice. When we say this we have in mind not the idea of Christianity that we find crystallized in the documents of Vatican II and in the teaching of the recent popes, but the one professed by the majority of Christians in India today.

### 1. Christianity as Ideology

Though Christianity has brought to India much that is new, yet it has also served to reinforce those ideas and attitudes in traditional Hinduism that are uncongenial to the requirements of social reconstruction. Conversely, the conservative elements in traditional Hinduism have reinforced the retrogressive elements in Christian theology, spirituality and ethics. The spiritualistic bias of the religious Hindu finds an ally in the Christian idea of the salvation of the 'soul' and in the spirituality nourished by the same. The attitude engendered by belief in *karma* and *samsāra* agrees well with the spirituality of resignation prevalent among many Christians. The traditional hierarchism of caste and the contemporary hierarchism of wealth find their counterpart in the hierarchism of authority in the churches.

Above all, it is in the field of ethics that Christianity joins hands with feudalism to buttress the forces of capitalism. Among Christians ethics tends to be reduced to a demand for integrity in personal life while it leaves intact even the most dehumanizing social structures. Even where it deals with social relations its fundamental norm is that of conformity to the *status quo*. It takes the prevalent conceptions of rights and obligations as natural and sanctioned by God. To give a few instances: the right to private property, understood as the right to use and to misuse it, is even today considered sacred and inviolable. So too Christian leaders are wont to laud the present form of government as democracy though in reality it is chiefly government of the privileged classes. Likewise they sing the praises of social order and peace, oblivious of the fact that order, as it exists, is maintained by the use of permanent violence on the part of a privileged minority against the mute majority. They

tend to forget that what the country needs today is neither stability nor anarchy but creative instability. In sum, the collective consciousness of the Christian Community is marked less by the urge to create the future than by the desire to conform to the past, less by hope in 'the not yet' than by submission to 'the already'. Christian beliefs have lost their eschatological tension and have assumed the nature of an ideology of legitimization. They therefore merit in large measure, *mutatis mutandis*, the criticism that Karl Marx levelled against the Christianity of his times: "The social principles of Christianity have justified slavery in ancient times, have glorified medieval servitude, and are capable of approving the oppression of the proletariat, if need be, even if with a slightly contrite air. The social principles of Christianity transfer to heaven the compensation for all infamy, and thereby justify the perpetuation of this infamy on earth. The Social principles of Christianity declare that all infamies committed by oppressors against the oppressed are the just punishment for original sin or other sins, i. e., that they are trials imposed by the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, on souls that are saved. The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, contempt of self, lowliness, submission, humility — in a word, all the qualities of the rabble. The proletariat that refuses to be treated like a rabble needs its courage, its self-respect and its taste for independence much more than its bread. The social principles of Christianity are crafty; the proletariat is revolutionary." (*Marx-Engles Gesamtausgabe*, iv, p. 200).

## 2. Reaction in Practice

Christian commitment in the secular field falls roughly under three heads: education, social service and other socio-economic projects. Seen from the angle of development through revolution their relevance needs to be questioned today.

(i) The present educational system in the country is geared to the creation of a middle class of government servants, businessmen, politicians, and professionals. This is especially true of university education. Neither schools nor colleges give the students an adequate understanding of the real problems and needs of the masses, let alone equipping them intellectually and morally to fulfil the task of social reconstruction. The values they represent



and disseminate are derived from Western capitalism, which stands for private interest, competition, aggressive self-assertion, and disdain for every form of manual work. And Christian schools and colleges are no exception. Their managements use their religious authority, wherever possible, to buttress and sanction the present system of education, just as they employ the latter to prop up their religious authority. No wonder that no creative initiative has come so far from them for the reform of education.

(ii) Social service is a valid form of Christian witness in society in any age. But where it is divorced from commitment to radical social reconstruction, as in India, it serves as a kind of opium for the people, as a palliative that dampens revolutionary fervour and inhibits the urge to revolt. Besides, with the steady flow of financial resources from abroad, those who organize these services tend to become an aristocracy in the Christian community.

(iii) The positive gains accruing to the masses from Christian socio-economic projects like co-operatives, irrigation works, cottage industries and industrial estates are marginal, considering the minority status of the Christian community and the colossal needs of 560 million people. In any case they are inadequate attempts at improving the living conditions of the people while leaving intact the present exploitative socio-economic system.

There is another reason why the present mode of institutional commitment on the part of the Christian community is detrimental to true development. India is becoming progressively secularized. The various sectors of life like education, science and politics, are freeing themselves from the domination of organized religion and reasserting their legitimate autonomy. This process is to be welcomed as a sign of man's coming of age. From this point of view, the attempts of the Christian community to bring within its control secular sectors of life through its own institutions is essentially reactionary.

We may sum up this section by saying that in respect of India's development Christianity has sinned both by default and by excess. By default, since its commitments aim merely at

improvements within the system without transforming it radically; by excess, since it has overstepped its own competence by trying to control secular spheres of life. Hence the historic task of Christianity today is to find a formula of commitment which, on the one hand, meets the objective demands of revolution, and on the other, respects the legitimate autonomy of secular man. In what follows we shall give a few guidelines for the reorientation of Christian *praxis* in the secular sphere.

## VI. Towards a Subversive Christianity

### I. Prophetic Proclamation

Unenlightened enthusiasm for economic development and capitulation to materialism are bringing about the death of prophecy in the Indian churches. And this in an age when even Marxism itself is striving to recapture its original prophetic mission and hope. It is often forgotten that development, as the humanization of man through the humanization of his socio-economic conditions, is possible only within the framework of a prophetic hope for the future of mankind. The primary task, therefore, of Christianity is to proclaim its hope that mankind is called to the eschatological community of love, to the classless society of the new heaven and the new earth. (Rev. 21. 1ff.). It must awaken and sustain hope in the ultimate success of the human venture on this planet. It should likewise awaken and sustain the faith that the eschatological community of love is germinally present and mysteriously taking shape already in the realities of secular history. Only such a faith, instinct with hope, can release the creative energies of the masses for the building up of the future, and inspire the generosity and courage required for demolishing the structures of unfreedom. Only such a faith instinct with hope can save man from the tyranny of the past and the present and thus ensure his transcendence.

### 2. Social criticism

To hope for the end-community of love as the absolute future of man is to accept the relativization of all historical stages of development. Furthermore, it is to be inwardly compelled to reject everything in the present that mutilates man, or erects barriers between man and man. Social criticism therefore is an

integral function of Christian hope. For such criticism to be effective, it must have the following characteristics: (i) It must be radical. It is not enough to bring to light the superficial inadequacies of the existing social system. It is necessary to go deeper and lay bare the underlying structural causes. Criticism must concern itself not only with the denunciation of personal sins but also with the elimination of structural sins, i. e. sins embodied in social institutions and laws. (ii) It must be universal, i. e. directed against all alienations of men whatever the community or religion they belong to. (iii) It must be scientific. Its methodology must be at once inductive and deductive, i. e. based on the data not only of revelation but also of the empirical sciences: economics, sociology, demography, cybernetics, and so on. For this it must make use of interdisciplinary and truly ecumenical consultation. (iv) It must be permanent since, in any social order man may create, new alienations are bound to crop up which in their turn will have to be eliminated. (v) It must be institutional. Though individual criticism on the part of Christians is legitimate and necessary, only the organized expression of the Christian conscience will have enough moral weight to influence the masses as well as centres of decision in society.

### 3. Politicization

For social criticism to be a dynamic force in reconstructing society it must percolate to the level of the masses. The under-privileged must be made conscious of the nature, the extent, and the mechanism of the exploitation to which they are being subjected. They should also be made aware of their rights as human beings and as citizens of the country. But a mere awareness of one's rights without a corresponding awareness of one's obligations can lead only to irresponsible agitation. It is here that the Marxist-inspired movements for liberation have failed. Politicization must therefore also include the education of the masses in the values of the new society envisaged, namely, the dignity of work, concern for the common good, the sense of solidarity, etc. The project of constructing a socialistic society cannot be accomplished by men and women whose system of values is derived from feudalism or capitalism. What is needed today is nothing less than a mental revolution among the masses.

#### 4. Revolutionary Action

Prophetic proclamation and criticism must be translated into action aimed at the eradication of unjust social structures and the construction of a more humane society. It is in embodying its hope in action that Christianity will be able to establish its credibility, and prove to the world that it is not an alienation, an escape into the realm of myth and phantasy. In fulfilling this task it may have to employ not only constitutional but also non-constitutional methods. For, the constitution and the existing legal structures weigh heavily in favour of the middle classes and are themselves in need of substantial reform. Besides, even when the laws are in themselves just, their implementation is obstructed by reactionary social forces, whose resistance can be overcome only by organized counter-resistance. This should not be interpreted as a plea for violence. Generally speaking, violence as a weapon for social revolution is either superfluous or ineffective: superfluous where the exploited classes are well organized and cemented into one creative macro-social force; ineffective, where it is resorted to by an impatient minority who want to change everything overnight without undertaking the arduous task of the politicization and organization of the masses. Even a minority may succeed in overthrowing a social system through violence. But, then, further violence will be required to prevent its being restored. Thus violence breeds violence. Organized resistance on the contrary, aims not at doing physical harm to human beings but at creating conditions where iniquitous structures cannot function any longer.

Let me conclude this paper on a note of warning: Lest Christianity, in its concern for the radical and rapid reconstruction of society, should reintroduce new forms of hierocracy, it is essential that its official leaders should generally confine themselves to prophetic proclamation, social criticism and certain forms of politicization of the masses. Initiating concrete programmes of revolutionary action and socio-economic reconstruction must be left to the enlightened initiative of individual Christians who in fulfilling this mission, will collaborate with all men of good will.



# Hinduism and Development

The Hindu idea of *Dharma* (religion) is connected with *Dhāraṇa* (uplift). *Dharma*, according to the Hindu view, is that which prevents us from falling, from degrading or ruining ourselves in any manner or respect whatsoever, and which makes for our welfare, progress, uplift and all-round development. The Hindu, therefore, has been religious not only in an other-worldly sense but also very much in a this-worldly sense. He has set before himself "not only heaven in the hereafter, but also heaven here, a welfare state (*Sarvōdaya Samāja*), in which all will be pleasantly and profitably occupied. To quote Manu, "That which secures *abhyudaya* (prosperity) here, and *Nihṣreyasa* (highest bliss) or *Mōkṣa* (deliverance from all fear) hereafter, is *Dharma*."<sup>1</sup>

As the Hindu has been interested in the means required for the attainment of joy and happiness on the physical, material and secular planes of life in this world as well as in a future world, his scriptures deal with all the branches of secular knowledge and finally with the highest kind of knowledge: that which deals with *Moksa* (emancipation). A Brahmana is enjoined to study the *Vēdas* with all the six *Vēdāṅgas* which include Grammar (*Vyākaraṇa*), Prosody (*Chandas*), Lexicography (*Nirukta*) and Astrology based on Astronomy (*Jyōtiṣa*). The very name of the four *Upa-Vēdas*: *Āyurvēda* (which includes Anatomy, Physiology, Medicine and Hygiene, and Surgery), *Dhanurvēda* (including Archery and other Military Sciences), *Gandharva-vēda* (including the Science and Art of Music) and *Sthāpatyavēda* (including Architecture, Engineering, Sculpture, Drawing and Painting), is sufficient to prove that the Hindus believed that "Every kind of knowledge helps us to raise ourselves from our present level to a higher one and that is *Dharma*."<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV, p. 14.

2. Sanatana Dharma, p. 3.

Hindus have all along believed that "It is a correct view of religion that it can never be out of harmony with science."<sup>3</sup> "Hinduism, therefore, has in no way been hostile to, or inconsistent with, science and a book like *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*,<sup>4</sup> could never be written in relation to Hinduism.

The divine discontent, spiritual restlessness, and spirit of enquiry, witnessed in upaniṣadic characters from all walks of life, in gods like Indra, Asuras like Virocana, kings like Janasruti, young boys like Naciketas, and women like Maitreyi are sufficient to prove that Hinduism not only permitted but also stimulated and encouraged, nay enjoined, the spirit of enquiry and investigation even with regard to the highest sciences. The *Mīmāṃsa Sūtras* and the *Vēdānta Sūtras* begin with an enquiry into the real nature of Dharma and Brahman respectively.

The doctrines of *Avatāra* and *Yuga* have helped the Hindus to reassess their scriptures, and make suitable alterations and modifications, introducing new ideas in the light of the changed times and developed knowledge. According to the theory of incarnation God may incarnate Himself anywhere at any time and in any form, and impart new knowledge. Likewise in different *Yugas* different *Smṛtis* have been written with the needs of a particular *Yuga* (age) in view. As times changed new *Smṛtis* came into existence. These sometimes replaced the old injunctions and prescribed new ones in view of the demands of the age. As a new *Smṛti* is regarded as not only a possibility but also a necessity scope is provided for the induction of new knowledge.

One who is acquainted with these remarkable features of Hinduism (also called *Sanātana Dharma*) cannot but agree with Swami Bharati Kṛṣṇa Tirtha when he observes that "it is said that religion in general and *Sanātana Dharma* in particular are enemies of all progress. But this is a wrong impression. If there is anything dynamic in the world it is *Sanātana Dharma*."<sup>5</sup>

3. Hinduism; Doctrine and way of Life, C. Rajagopalachari, p. 10.

4. By Prof. A. D. White and published by George Braziller, N. Y. 1955.

5. *Sanatana Dharma*, p. 3.

Hinduism came into contact with modern European civilization and culture at a time when it was at its lowest, after crumbling under Muslim rule for centuries. The Englishman arrived in India with new sciences and a new age of machine and manufacture and gradually established his domination over this country. This made the Hindus realize that their slavery came from their love of ease, and had befallen them because their forefathers had neglected material and scientific development and had not known even the use of gunpowder as late as the tenth century when they were conquered by the Turks. They were convinced that it was scientific development that was responsible for the predominant position of the Europeans in the world. As a result an uncritical appreciation of all things Western took possession of their minds. This, however, bore good fruit, viz., the spread of English education. It broadened the vision of educated Hindus by bringing them into contact with Western science, literature and history. In the light of this new knowledge many evil customs that had become common in Hindu society during the days of its decadence showed themselves in their true colours. A number of modern movements ushered in a renaissance in the country. New sects like the Brahmo Samāja, the Ārya Samāja, the Prārthana Samāja and the Rama Kṛṣṇa Mission, were founded to introduce reforms in the social and political outlook of Hinduism and to re-interpret it in the light of modern conditions. Some Hindu leaders interested themselves in reform without establishing any sects. Some of them recommended mere window-dressing, while others advocated a root-and-branch reformation of Hindu society.

Having discovered that oriental scholarship on ancient lines was inadequate to the needs of modern Hindu society, certain Hindu leaders began to work for a synthesis of the ancient Hindu learning with scientific education of the Western type. In this field the contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya were very significant.

An adjustment of the teachings of Hinduism with the scientific thought and the political and social philosophies of the

West was attempted by some eminent Hindus. Swami Vivekananda gave a new interpretation of Vedanta and Dr Radhakrishnan essayed the task of aligning Hinduism with modern thought.

As a result of the renaissance Hindu society was modernised and shed many of its social and historical practices like polygamy, child-marriage, the ban on re-marriage of widows, sati, devadasi, prohibition of foreign travel and untouchability. These were summarily disposed of as superstitions or antiquated traditions. Although some Hindu organizations clung to outmoded customs with the fanatical desperation of a last-ditch stand, the number of Hindus who do not accept the caste system, endogamic marriage and taboos concerning food and drink has since been fast increasing. A study of the history of the world convinced the Hindu that this-worldly and secular values like liberty, equality and fraternity are in no way less significant than religious ones. He was induced to replace his belief in monarchy by a faith in democracy, and this enabled India to emerge as a great democracy of the modern world.

The Christian Missions set an example that inspired the Hindus to pay more attention to life on earth and lay more emphasis on the social aspects of religion and to work with missionary zeal for the well being of their society. As a result thousands of earnest and enthusiastic workers especially those belonging to various Samājas and to the Rama Kṛṣṇa Mission dedicated themselves to the uplift and betterment of the Hindu masses. With the conviction that it is more desirable to work for bringing about heaven on earth with the help of Hindu philosophy, reason and science, than to go on indulging in delusions regarding heaven and hell, they became engaged in the reconstruction of Hindu society.



# Education and Development in India

Obviously, education is bound up with the development of any country. For that matter it has brought about the liberation of the whole human race from savagery into civilization. But terms like 'education' and 'civilization' are vague; their meaning is determined by the goals to which they are directed. There can be education for slavery, as there has been in totalitarian countries. On the other hand, there are many elements in the life of primitive peoples that modern civilization strives to recapture: the naïve vigour of their art-forms and the exhilarating rhythms of their dances. Unless we define the goals of education and civilization it is unlikely that we shall have clear ideas of what we expect of them. Education, let us say, should create the bread-winner who is also the good citizen, but as man does not live by bread alone, it should also enable him to make the best of his temporal life here and of his spiritual life hereafter.

In India, to judge not from aims but results, our concern has been quantitative, rather than qualitative, and even from this standpoint our achievement has fallen short of the target. We have yet to establish a basic minimum of literacy for the coming generations. Although, in Kerala, the percentage of literates is high, it remains deplorably low in other parts of India, and it would appear that Kerala too has not gained much by free education up to the high school. Large numbers remain unemployed. What is worse, the important aim of independent thinking remains unfulfilled. In the universities at least one would expect teachers and students to form their own judgements. Instead they borrow their opinions at second hand from the newspapers and the public platform, and echo the thinking of a party or a popular demagogue. An education which produces yes-men, far from conducing to the development of a country, spells its ruin. It ends up by perpetuating the regime of a few who serve their own interests, and there is no feed-back corres-

ponding to the input, in terms of benefits to the common man. Education in India, and in Kerala in particular, presents the spectacle of a colossal waste of time and energy, leading many to feel, including students, that we would be better off with no education at all.

In case this sounds pessimistic let us take a closer look at the educational scene. It is virtually the same as it was when the British first came to rule over India. True enough we have switched from the medium of English for instruction in the schools to the vernaculars, but study remains examination-centred. Learning is by rote. The teacher dictates notes and the pupil crams them or has recourse to a "guide", a published book containing the answers to questions that are likely to turn up in the examination. This, one should think, is a more sensible procedure, for as a student once cynically put it, why waste time listening to explanations in the class-room, or even attending college, when it is possible to cram the answers in the last three months of a two-year course and get through the examination or perhaps obtain a high pass? In the old days a university degree was a passport to employment. It is not even that today. Its prestigious value too is disappearing, and instead of raising the possessor in the esteem of the public it tends to bring him into contempt.

Today, as never before, there is a complete breakdown in communication between the college lecturer and his class. English continues to be the medium of instruction but a student comes from school with so poor an equipment that he understands next to nothing of what is being said. At the best of times lecturing is not the ideal method of teaching. In former times a lecture was a stimulus to thinking, a means of inspiring the student to form original views and express them in his own words. Nowadays it is, as far as the lecturer is concerned, a soliloquy, and for the student a bath of words. The student is expected to sit still in silent attention while the teacher spouts — on him. No human being can endure this for an hour, and all the while the teacher and the student are unconsciously aware of the futility of the process. Of what earthly use is this ordeal, this mutual frustration, when at the end of it there is not even the prospect of a job?

From the point of view of efficiency what is necessary, as everyone knows, is smaller classes and a better teacher-pupil ratio. In the schools, not to speak of the university, a teacher facing a class of sixty or seventy pupils has to harangue a mob. If he wants to be successful he has to be something of a policeman, though his scope for being one is very limited, and something of a clown, cracking jokes to keep his listeners quiet. He has also to be something of an intellectual hair-cutter, for he must trim the pupil's mind to the requirements of the examination. What else can be expected but that he should feel frustrated and throw up his hands, abandoning all efforts at coping with his task? Commission after commission has been set up to propose reforms in our educational system, but their recommendations have not gone further than the shelf on which their reports have been put. One obvious way of solving the problem of the large number of educated unemployed is to reduce the size of classes, but it is a sign of the insincerity of governments that in Kerala it was suggested that there should be no enrolment of students in teacher-training colleges for the next four years! This remedy reminds one of the doctor who amputates a patient's head in order to cure his headache.

If education is to bring development to India there has to be an earnest realization of its importance on the part of the powers that be. What is now imparted should be called "inducation" for it inducts a load of information into the student instead of educating his mind into activity, as the very etymology of the word implies. Perhaps we shall make a good start if we change our terminology and give things their right names. We shall at least call the bluff, and open our eyes to our needs. Democracy requires citizens who can weigh situations for themselves, and judge the quality of the government and the administration that they get. This is the universal minimum that should be kept in mind. The question of education for employment poses a different problem.

The Radhakrishnan Commission on University Education (1948-49) emphasized the need for high-grade technological education to meet the needs of a new-born nation. The number of medical colleges in India went up from 29 in 1950 to 93 in 1968, and the number of medical students from 2,675 to 11,577 (vide Veda Prakasha's paper, *Manpower Planning and Education*:

*in India*, read at the Commonwealth Education Conference held in Australia, in February 1971). The number of engineering colleges increased from 49 to 138 in the period 1950-1967, and of engineers from 2198 to 13873, with the result that unemployment set in, and there has been a steep fall in enrolment. What do these figures mean except short-sighted planning and lack of correlation between technological expansion in the country and the number of different kinds of engineers required for it. An over simplified and naïve view of the future made us suppose, in a general way, that as more engineers would be necessary we should have more engineering colleges. Instead of working out the mathematics of the problem, and spacing out the increase in students, we proceeded in haphazard fashion to step up production of manpower: the only form of production, in India, that is not only unprofitable but harmful. Now it is medical education that is facing a slump in employment.

This is not to say that we do not need doctors and engineers. A large number of both are needed to further the development process in our country. But the doctors are unwilling to go into the countryside: there is more money to be earned easily in the towns; and our engineers have no opportunities of employing their skill for the progress of the country. The private sector gets its requirements in the form of mechanical engineers who are recruited through recommendations and nepotism. As far as the government sector is concerned the profession is over-staffed. Though we need more bridges and better roads the engineers in service are satisfied with a slow provision of amenities, and the government is thankful for their dilatoriness because it makes smaller demands on the budget. Meanwhile the common man suffers. The truth is that our fundamental education has not inculcated in our politicians or civil servants the feeling that the citizen's convenience takes precedence over the private interests of one group or the other.

In our educational system there is, what may be called, a psychological war between the teachers and the taught. The new teacher goes with his idealism for the first time to a class. He hopes to make an impression, talks over the heads of his students, lectures to himself and is annoyed at the inattentiveness of his audience. The student knows that the lecturer can be baited and deploys his resources to be as mischievous as possible.



The result is an atmosphere of hostility, with suspicion on the one hand, and badgering on the other. Under these circumstances communication is hardly possible, and each gets on the other's nerves. It would seem that the lecturer is living in an old world of two decades ago, when the attitude of students was one of hero-worship, and learning, at higher levels, was a blind acceptance of the master's views. This again is uncongenial to independent thinking which modern India needs more than ever today.

The malaise, then, is plainly known; what are the remedies? How can education be oriented to the needs of development? One answer is obvious. The governments in the States and at the Centre should realize that education is at least as important as industrialization for the progress of the country. More schools could be opened, with smaller classes, to absorb the educated unemployed. We should awaken to the fact that from the lowest level upwards the aim of teaching should not be to impart a load of information but to foster independent thinking. At higher levels it is imperative that the present flow into the university should be drained off into productive channels. There should be facilities for apprenticeship in firms and industries where the ordinary high school student will be able to get a practical training in a profession, and thereafter use his energies to earn a living and also contribute to the development of the country.

Instead of squandering large sums on commissions for reform and on a top-heavy bureaucratic educational administration, under which the teacher's originality is crushed, we might think of an organization, in the States and at the Centre, which works statistically to correlate the number of differently educated citizens with the country's professional needs: a kind of employment exchange not of the present kind, with its hit-or-miss methods, but one that is run scientifically so that everybody is provided with the kind of work that suits him. This would be not a step but a leap forward, but it has to be taken if social justice is to be done to all. On the other hand, a new psychological outlook is necessary on the part of the teacher, who must look on teaching not as a dictatorial imposition of information from the height of the platform but as a collaboration in the search for knowledge. There should be more mixing, and freer contacts between teachers and students through extra-curricular activities, for instance, on the playing-fields or in the amateur theatre, and

particularly through a genuine desire on the part of the teacher to get to know his students intimately, so that they confide their problems in him, and he does what he can to help in solving them. The present student unrest in India is largely due to the Olympian aloofness of the teacher and the feeling of being unwanted and uncared-for on the part of the student who needs guidance and comfort and can get them better from one who is *in loco parentis* than from a professional counsellor. The old 'gurukula' system, in which students lived with the teacher cannot, perhaps, be recovered, but some suitable equivalent of it is desirable.

Unrest among youth in developed countries has been due to different reasons. We hear of students demanding the right to assess the efficiency of their teachers, and a say in the administration of the universities. This is only fair, since the learner should not be coerced into putting himself under someone who, as he knows from first-hand, cannot benefit him at all. On the other hand an arrangement of this kind would keep the teacher on his toes, and ensure that he did not slacken and subside into complacency.

There is, however, another side to this protest abroad, and it has been called the anti-science movement. Modern youth feel that excessive expenditure on scientific research is inhuman, as long as large numbers of the world are denied their human birth-right of a decent standard of living. They think that it is more important to improve the lot of one's fellowmen than to land on the moon. In a lecture to the Royal Society on 'Science and Antiscience' in April, 1971, Sir Eric Ashby pointed out that many Americans (*New York Times*, January, 1970) regarded walking on the moon as "an arrogant piece of conspicuous consumption," and asked why this "sustained effort of planned technology" was not "successfully applied to other goals . . . to the transport problem in cities, or to poverty, or to the relief of the Third World?" This has led to re thinking on the pattern of education. Professor A. B. Pippard of Cambridge University (quoted by A. Verstraeten, S. J. in an article "Is Technomania on the Way Out?", in *New Frontiers in Education*, Vol 1, No. 3) has expressed the view that undergraduates who enrol in faculties of science, should be given only a general education in sciences, which should be regarded as "one of the arts and only peripherally as a technical skill".

Professor A. D. C. Peterson of the Oxford Department of Education (quoted in the same article) suggests that education should be used as "a countervailing force to preserve human sympathy and compassion and to offset alienation and materialism which could easily be the product of a technological culture."

This being the case in the West we should take warning from the disillusionment there, and though we cannot afford to pay less attention to science and technology as yet, in our country, we might do well to remind ourselves that "man does not live by bread alone". Education besides being practically oriented should foster idealism and encourage a broader vision of interests, so that when a young man goes out into the world he knows how to use his time to get the highest pleasures and the greatest satisfaction out of life. George Sampson, an educationist of an older generation, once remarked that "Education is concerned with the twenty-four hours of a man's life, not with the five or six that he sells to an employer". It should develop tastes and a love for knowledge of all kinds for its own sake. We live in a world where books come out every day on various fields of study, written in non-technical language, for the man in the street. Should we not participate in this onward march, and enjoy knowing more and more about this universe which embraces all forms of life from the mosses to man, and all kinds of matter from a grain of sand to the stars? There are also the arts, and psychology and philosophy. We should be induced by our education to read widely with zest, to be more interested in our fellowmen, to be more concerned about the advancement of our country, to see ourselves as a part of the whole world.

This is development of mind and character, in addition to education as a means to employment and intelligent citizenship. Education is indeed the prime factor in human development. It is necessary that we should, as a nation and as individuals, give more thought than we have in the past, to the question of what education is, and not complacently aim at getting more and more children and adolescents into our present type of school and college.

# BULLETIN:

## The Role of the Church in the Industrial Development of Kerala

### 1. Introduction

Recent documents of the Church, particularly those of the Second Vatican Council, and statements of ecumenical conferences lay great stress on the urgency of Church involvement in industrial development especially in the developing countries.<sup>1</sup> But such policy statements and resolutions will be of no avail unless the Church herself becomes directly involved in the actual processes through which industrial development is achieved.

The scope of this article is practical: it proposes to discuss what the Church can do to promote the industrial development of Kerala. The assumption from which we start is that on the part of the Church a concern for industrial development, and her actual involvement in it are an integral part of the mission entrusted to her by Christ.

### 2. Special Urgency of Church involvement in Kerala

It is well known that Kerala has problems of overpopulation and unemployment. The latter has been aggravated by the lack of industries to absorb the people who have become surplus on the land. Owing to widespread unemployment, poverty is spreading upwards from those who are worse off economically

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1. Second Vatican Council: *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, Chapter 3 p. 272 (Abbot Edition)

Cfr. also the Report of the Asian Ecumenical Conference for Development entitled *Liberation Justice, Development* ' 1970.



to others who were not so badly off a short time ago. The spread of education makes the poor sense poverty all the more acutely as they are becoming increasingly aware that reasonable access to the basic necessities of life is a fundamental right of every man. An extremely slow rate of industrial development accompanied by the growing inequalities of income between the rich and the poor and the continued exploitation of the latter has created frustration and bitterness among the masses in Kerala. In certain unorganised sectors of Industry the daily wages of a worker are as low as two rupees while certain government servants and privileged persons earn as much as 50 to 60 rupees a day. Frustration on account of longstanding injustices has created a revolutionary ferment that has been brewing in the State for the last 10 or 15 years. It has on several occasions erupted into mass demonstrations and bloody uprisings under the leadership of the Marxists.

Seen in this context, the Church's involvement in industrial development which is the only way to ward off poverty and provide employment is not an issue that can be discussed at leisure in seminars and bishops conferences and then conveniently forgotten. The existing situation in Kerala makes it a matter of urgency that the Church should take immediate steps for effective involvement. This is important in the interests of the Church herself. The Church in Kerala seems to be loosing its credibility as the sacrament of God's love and man's hope among the people in industry especially the working class. To make our discussion realistic we shall consider the role of the Church in the background of the actual situation of industrialization in Kerala.

### **3. Industrialization in Kerala - a brief survey**

The economy here is primarily based on agriculture. Eighty per cent of the total population in the state are engaged in agricultural activities. Most of the traditional industries in the state are based on agricultural produce such as cocoanut, cashewnut, rubber, tea and coffee. To a great extent they are organised in units as cottage industries. According to the 1970 statistics there were 3,110 registered factories in the state

employing over 8,00,000 workers.<sup>2</sup> Among these factories only 64 were major industrial units and only 12 factories employed more than 1000 workers. The industries that employ the great bulk of the working population are coir and cashew. This latter alone earns 40% of the foreign exchange of the state.

The industries in the traditional sectors are seriously handicapped for several reasons. Most of them are uneconomic in size and are run on very little capital. This, in the small-scale industries works out to Rs. 1,500 per worker as against the all-India average of Rs. 5,600.<sup>3</sup> Consequently these industries use old and outmoded technology which tells on productivity and results in low wages. Besides a shifting or sinking market owing to the entry of substitutes, like plastics and nylon for coir products, has seriously paralysed some of them, for example the coir industry.

The initiative in starting modern factories came from the Government of the erstwhile State of Travancore. Several major factories were set up between the year 1935 and 1948. The important ones were: Fertilizers and Chemicals, Travancore; the Indian Aluminium Company, Titanium Products, Trivandrum, and Travancore Rayons. After independence for a long period no development worth the name took place. It was only in 1965 that the Central Government opened the Hindustan Machine Tools Factory in Kalamassery. Premier Tyres Ltd. also belongs to this period. In recent years industrialisation in Kerala has registered further expansion with the opening of the Cochin Oil Refineries and the Ambalamedu Division of FACT.

One special feature of recent industrialisation in Kerala is that most of the modern industrial units are concentrated in the Eloor-Kalamassery area in the district of Ernakulam. There are as many as 50 major factories in this industrial belt employing over 50,000 skilled workers. Industrially this is the most important centre in the State. Concentration, however, has also produced certain undesirable results such as the exodus of a large number of rural

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2. *Kerala Directory*: 1970, Star Publications, Alwaye p. 324.

3. *Kerala Industries Directory*: 1965 p. 1.

migrants to the industrial area, rises in the price level and the growth of slums. Yet another disadvantage is that industrial conflicts resulting in strikes, or stoppage of work affect the neighbouring units.

Now to sum up and focus attention on the special features of industrialisation in Kerala; (i) The industrial scene in Kerala is dominated by agro-based small-scale industries. (ii) Most of the industries in Kerala produce consumer goods; there is an acute shortage of basic industries. (iii) There is a definite pattern in the districtwise distribution of industries. (iv) Labour productivity and consequently the earning capacity of the worker in Kerala is lower than that of workers in other states. The average per capita annual earnings of a worker are only Rs. 1,402 when his counterpart in Maharashtra earns Rs. 2,242 and in Gujarat Rs. 2,136.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Which is the way to Industrial Progress?

The people of Kerala generally regard the setting up of large-scale factories as the only sure way to industrial development and progress. Hence the clamour for large public sector undertakings in the State. But analysis of the resources and conditions in Kerala will reveal that the path to industrial progress for our state will ultimately lie in the strengthening and expansion of the small-scale industrial base which is very weak at present. Serious attempts should be made to use better technology and increase productivity in these industries. The Government has set up several institutions to give technical advice and financial assistance. But the intended help hardly ever reaches the deserving entrepreneur. It gets stuck fast in endless red-tape procedures. As for financial assistance what is made available is absolutely inadequate. It is calculated that the small-scale industries to be able to operate economically need Rs 50 crores as working capital every year. But the total loan that was granted in the year 1970 by the Government was only Rs 3 crores and 90 lakhs.<sup>5</sup>

Any development therefore will ultimately depend on the initiative and spirit of enterprise of the people themselves.

4. Indian Labour Year Book, 1970.

5. *Manorama Year Book*, 1970 p. 160.

Conditions in the State are favourable. Kerala is first among the States in literacy, and the people being generally engaged in agrarian occupations can easily adapt their methods to industries know-how relating to products based on agriculture. Besides newer ideas easily gain acceptance with them. Recent researches conducted by C. F. T. R. I., Mysore and I. C. J. C., Calcutta have unearthed the possibilities of new industrial products from agricultural produce available in Kerala.<sup>6</sup> They have found that rice bran contains 10 to 22% of edible oil and that husk contains furfural, a basic material used in several organic industries, and at present imported from foreign countries. They have also discovered that valuable industrial products can be extracted from straw, tapioca and cashew apples, a useful liquid from cashew-nut shells and useful fibre materials from banana skins. These raw materials are at present either wasted or only partly used for industrial purposes. Certain other raw materials are taken outside the state for processing and the manufacture of finished products. Kerala, for instance, produces 80 per cent of the total rubber yield in India, but 90 per cent of the rubber products are manufactured outside Kerala. Fruits like mango, pineapple, banana and jack fruit offer immense scope for processing and canning for home and external markets. Hence before crying for help from the Centre or from outside agencies, it is imperative that we strengthen the existing small-scale industries and start new ones to make the maximum use of our untapped resources. Besides development of small-scale industries can prepare the way for the starting of large scale ones. The example of Punjab is worth emulating. This state has developed her small-scale industrial base with the help of locally available resources and power. She set up well over 70,000 industrial units and today she presents a picture of prosperity and wealth.<sup>7</sup> One wonders, why Kerala cannot achieve similar progress when an abundance of natural resources and available man-power exists in the State.

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6. *Kerala Directory*, 1970, 1970 p. 376.

7. Prof. Ramaswamy "Development of Small Scale Industries in Kerala" in *Kerala Labour and Industries Review* January 1967.



## 5. Why is Kerala industrially undeveloped ?

It is the unanimous opinion of economists that Kerala has immense potentialities for industrial development, endowed as she is with an abundance of natural and human resources. On the side of natural resources, she has a vast treasury of agricultural and forest wealth which can provide raw materials for industrial operations. This is the only State with surplus power. It is calculated that with the completion of the Idikki project Kerala will have a surplus of 2,87,000 Kw of electric power. Till a short while ago it was believed that Kerala was very backward in the matter of minerals. But a recent geological survey of Kerala has proved that there exist considerable deposits of bauxite and iron ore in the districts of Kozhikode, Quilon and Trivandrum. Exceptionally good transport facilities also are available in the State. On the side of human resources, Kerala labour is known to be educated, intelligent and hardworking. It has been also found that the people in Kerala are much faster in acquiring technical skills than people in other States. The obvious question, then, to ask is why Kerala is industrially the least developed of the Indian States ?

There are several popular misconceptions regarding the lack of industrial development in Kerala. Many people think that it is due to the neglect of the Centre. There is some truth in this allegation but it has been magnified out of all proportion by political propaganda. At any rate it is puerile to shift the entire responsibility for the present state of affairs to the Centre. Besides there is a fallacy in this line of thinking: it takes for granted that with the setting up of a few large public sector projects development will automatically take place. The common man in Kerala tends to think of development almost exclusively in terms of large enterprises which can provide jobs for more people. But real development requires more investment and increased production by making use of existing resources.

Yet another popular misconception particularly prevalent among industrialists is the assumption that Kerala labour is troublesome and unmanageable. In fact this impression is widespread among industrialists all over India. This is nothing more than a myth and is not borne out by facts. Recent studies on Industrial

relations in Kerala show that Kerala does not compare unfavourably with other States in this respect. An analysis of statistics regarding the State-wise distribution of the number of industrial disputes and the consequent loss of man-days confirms this conclusion. It is difficult to trace the origin of this myth, or to explain it. One reason could be that Kerala is a stronghold of Marxists, and entrepreneurs have an instinctive fear that it is more difficult to deal with labour when it is influenced by such militant ideologies as Marxism and Naxalism than when it is not. At any rate the labels 'difficult', 'troublesome' and so on, attached to Kerala labour have done immense harm to the cause of industrial development in Kerala as it deters entrepreneurs from investing their money here, and starting the industries.

What then is the real and deep reason for the lack of industrial development? The following is a tentative hypothesis which needs to be tested and established by further study and research: The slow rate of industrial development in Kerala may primarily be traced not to economic but sociological and cultural factors. There exist longstanding and deep-rooted religious and cultural factors which inhibit industrial entrepreneurship among the people in Kerala. This hypothesis has been modelled on Max Webber's thesis regarding the industrialization of England. He contended that the one decisive factor which prepared the way for the industrialization of England in the 19th century was the protestant ethic which nurtured values favourable to industrialisation. He identified these values as habits of hard work, frugal living, thrift and saving by restricting consumption.

The religious and cultural background of India probably presents the reverse of the situation which prevailed in England. One could perhaps speak of a 'Hindu Ethic' which operates in India as a drag on the people's spirit of entrepreneurship whether in industry or in business. At the national level the situation was to some extent redeemed by the existence of groups like the Parsis and Jains who possess an exceptional genius for business and industry.

But in Kerala there is not a single religious or social group that has produced businessmen or industrialists comparable to the outstanding figures in the communities named above. If

there had been any that could produce a Mafatlal or a Jain the industrial map of Kerala would have been totally different today. The major religious groups in Kerala are Hindus, Christians and Muslims. The bulk of the population is Hindu consisting mainly of Namboothiris (Brahmins), Nairs, Ezhavas and other castes. The greater part of the land and productive resources were owned by the Namboothiris and Nairs. These communities have been feudal in outlook and averse to productive enterprises. Instead, the emphasis with them has been on spending and conspicuous consumption. According to David Mcleland the saving habit, investment, willingness to take risks and the desire to excel are the hallmarks of what he calls an achieving society. It is precisely these characteristics that are absent among the people of the upper castes in Kerala. The people of the lower castes, even if they possessed the business spirit did not have the resources to start industries or invest in enterprises.

At this stage one would probably think that the presence of considerable proportion of Christians and Muslims in the State, who have contacts with other cultures, might have made a difference. But unfortunately this has not been the case either. While the Christians in this state owe their origin to contacts with the Middle East and Western countries, they have not followed the Western in their good points like the habit of hard work and the desire to excel. The latter quality is particularly lacking among the Catholics. Though they form the majority among the Christians they have traditionally kept themselves busy in plantation, agriculture and trade. Their religion which in practice has consisted mostly of external observances and compliance with certain ancestral norms did not inspire them in the least to such 'worldly' pursuits as industry. The other Christian communities gave greater importance to education and generally have sought security in jobs in the administrative services and industry rather than begin some productive enterprise of their own. The Muslims in the State have generally concentrated on

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8. *Kerala Industries Directory*, 1965 p. 35.

9. *Mathrubhoomy* daily, 3 december 1971.

small-scale business and agriculture. Thus none of the communities in Kerala possesses or has developed the cultural background required for industrial development and progress.

The truth of the above hypothesis is supported by the fact that most of the industries in Kerala have been started by outsiders or by those who have migrated to Kerala and settled there. The industries started by Keralites themselves are conspicuously few. Even those who have come forward, have been influenced to do so by contact with business and industry outside the State. What is required therefore for the industrial development of Kerala is a cultural rather than an economic revolution.

## 6. Role of the Church: Pre-Requisites

The Church in Kerala has a unique advantage over its counterparts in other States if it resolves to serve the industrial sector. She has the highest percentage of Catholics in India and possesses considerable financial and human resources. No other organisation in the State, religious or secular can count on the services of so many dedicated men and women. However, the Church in Kerala has been almost completely absent from the field of industry. In recent years, there has been a growing realization at least among some personnel of the Church that she should enter this very important sphere of human life.

But before she can do anything effectively it is absolutely necessary that she should change her currently prevalent image among the people in industry. The Church has given the impression that her mission is to save souls and that the task entrusted to her priests is to cater to the 'spiritual needs' of the faithful, as if souls can be saved in isolation and man can have spiritual needs unrelated to other kinds in his existential situation. The result has been the fatal mistake of failing to see man as a unity and his problems as inter-related.

As a reaction, it would seem, the Christians in industry, especially the Catholics, do not look up any longer to the Church for guidance. They tend to go to the priest only for routine rituals in connection with birth, marriage and death, and for favours from the church-sponsored institutions. Attendance at



Sunday Mass has dropped considerably in the industrial areas. In the Eloor-Kalamassery area for instance only 30 to 40% of the workers attend Sunday services. Even among those who are church-goers a great many are motivated by fear of 'mortal sin' or social pressure rather than by a desire to give expression to their faith or to meet an experienced need of Christian life.

In a recent conference of lay leaders in industry with the Chairman of the CBCI commission on Labour there was an attempt to probe into the reason for this state of alienation of industrial people from the Church. Several interventions by the participants converged into one line of explanation. They said, "The Church and the priests almost exclusively busy themselves with the administration of sacraments and performance of traditional rituals which have little relevance to the life of the people in industry. They do not show concern about matters of crucial importance to the workers in an industry or take an interest in it. For instance, when there is a strike in one of the factories and hundreds of families go hungry, the priests in the area often seem to be not even aware or concerned about the situation."<sup>10</sup> The conference was unanimous in recommending that this situation should be changed and that the Church and the priests should enter the field of industry to serve man where he is and in needs actually felt by him.

But even, when the Church has succeeded in breaking the ice, and establishing rapport with the employees, the industry will not welcome the Church unless she takes all precautions to dispel the fear that she is trying to expand her strength by using opportunities that come her way for making converts. She will also have to overcome the suspicion prevalent among the workers in general that the Church has a bourgeois mentality and will invariably side with the capitalist in their conflict with him. It is this suspicion that blocks the Church and her priests effectively from access to the field of trade union activities.

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10. Report of the Consultation with Lay Leaders with Bishop Leonard de Souza, the CBCI Chairman on the Commission on Labour at St Paul's-College, Kalamassery on 7th Nov. 1971.

On the other hand, large sections of the people in industry, especially non-Christians, who are aware of the remarkable services rendered by the Church in the field of education, health and social work expect similar service also in the field of industrial development. Last year the Kerala State Productivity Council and the Institute of Industrial Engineering jointly convened a seminar on the role of the social organizations in the industrial development of Kerala. Leaders of different religious organizations including the Catholic Church were present: The seminar report reads: "There was a time when the number of educational institutions was small and consequently the opportunity for getting educated did not exist for the great majority of people. It was then that the Christian missionary institutions came forward to build schools for the public and many voluntary and religious institutions followed suit. It is high time that the abilities, resources and efforts of our social organisations are turned towards industrial development for creating avenues for fruitful employment of unemployed youth".<sup>11</sup>

## 7. Guide Lines for Action

At the outset it must be made clear that for the moment we are not concerned with pastoral action among the Catholics engaged in industry, which is an important aspect of the role of the Church in industry and is a topic by itself. Here we are directly concerned with action to be taken by the Church as an institution to make an effective contribution towards industrial development.

Here it is important to bear in mind one important principle: The Church should plan and execute all her programmes in collaboration with other agencies in the field such as trade unions and even political parties. In the past she was not in the habit of doing so but she will have to learn to work in this manner.

The first step in her relations with industry would be to make regular and close contacts with the people there. Her purpose in such a dialogue would be to try to understand in-

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11. *Kerala Productivity Journal* Dec. Editorial, Dec. 1970 p. 3.

dustry and its problems, to find out areas where her service might be welcome and in this background to discuss her plans and programmes of action. At the same time she will be helping to rebuild the image of the Church in industry. This may be effectively done by dedicated and specially trained priests who should be given the freedom required for such direct entry and contact with industry. The feasibility of dedicated priests getting employed in factories as 'worker priests' as in France should be studied. Contacts in industry should be established with everyone regardless of caste or creed. While collaborating with industry the Church would do well to keep the following points in mind. They are based on the industrial situation in Kerala and the problems discussed already.

**(a) Training and Research:** The Church could set up institutes for training and research in problems related to industrialization in the state. These would be able to provide information regarding the availability of raw material and market conditions to prospective entrepreneurs. She could all undertake sociological studies to find out why Malayalees lack the spirit of entrepreneurship. Such institutes are likely to get substantial support from industry, the government and the universities.

**(b) Starting New Industries:** This of course is a line of action fraught with a number of obstacles and risks. The Church lacks experience. The administrative and managerial skills required for industrial enterprises are different from those that are required for running educational and charitable institutions. But the difficulties are not insurmountable. One way of solving this problem is to entrust such ventures to boards of reliable and experienced laymen. Any attempt by the Church to interfere in the management of such industrial projects are bound to bring about their failure. The Church could also set up revolving funds to grant loans to prospective entrepreneurs who may be in need of financial assistance.

**(c) Trade Union Action:** The measures suggested so far will not contribute to development in the service of man unless the Church works also for a just distribution of the fruits of labour among the various agents of production. Just wages for the workers can be obtained only through Trade Union action. But

in Kerala the Trade Unions are mostly influenced by political parties. They will block any effort of the Church to enter this field. Even the independent trade unions and workers are likely to distrust her intentions if she tries to intervene directly in collective bargaining. Despite all these limitations the Church can do much. To mention but a few concrete lines of action: The Church (i) can give training in guidance to Trade Union Leaders and build up inside leadership, (ii) provide counselling and legal aid to trade unionists and workers, (iii) initiate and encourage independent, non-political trade Unionism, (iv) collaborate with existing Trade Unions wherever possible in the just demands of the workers, (v) organise workers in unorganised sectors, for example the contract workers and casual labourers who are mostly unorganised and consequently greatly exploited. But a necessary pre-requisite for this action would be that the Church itself does justice to its own employees like sacristans, and cooks and other domestic servants.

**(d) Welfare Services for workers;** This is an area considerably neglected by both management and Unions. The managements generally tend to limit the provision of welfare facilities to what is statutorily required by law. The Trade Unions in Kerala traditionally give little or no heed to the various aspects of welfare of workers in their exclusive preoccupation with demands for higher wages. Hence this is an area open for social agencies like the Church. But here as in other areas, the Church should gain the confidence of the workers and collaborate with the Trade Unions. The workers in Kerala have a high degree of self-respect and they are likely to boycott any service given as 'free' or as 'charity'. We shall only indicate two problems of welfare acutely felt by workers especially in industrial areas like Kalamassery.

**(i) Budgeting;** Higher wages alone are of no use unless the workers are trained to do proper budgeting and are saved from the clutches of unscrupulous money-lenders. Recent studies conducted among the lower grade workers in two factories in this area show that as many as 90% of the workers were heavily in debt. The creditors charge very high rates of interest ranging from 6 to 10 rupees for every Rs 100 per month -



this amounts to 72 to 120 per annum!<sup>12</sup> (ii) *Housing*: The great majority of workers in this area are migrants from other places and they do not have houses of their own. They are forced to live in unhygienic and ill-ventilated line buildings. These tenants have no protection from exploitation by unscrupulous land lords who extort from them large portions of their wages (15 to 20%) as rent. Only a few companies have provided any housing and in these cases also they have covered only 15% of the total work force. Several thousands of houses need to be built for workers in this area. Many of the workers manage to buy plots for houses but are unable to build owing to lack of finances. A scheme for granting loans to workers is likely to be enthusiastically welcomed.

Interviews held with Trade Union Leaders and workers by the author suggest that the services of the Church or church-sponsored agencies will be more welcome in the fields of welfare than in the field of direct Trade Union action. Besides in this field there is less possibility of the Church yielding to the temptation of trying to dominate the show.

We have already spoken of collaboration with other agencies as ideal for the role of the Church in industrial development. When it is a question of involvement by different Churches, they should move as one and work together closely in the planning and execution of all their programmes. This is quite in keeping with the spirit of Second Vatican Council. A right step in this direction has been already taken by the churches in the setting up of Ecumenical Industrial Service. This is an Organisation started in Kalamasserry area by 5 churches, namely, the Orthodox, Marthomite, CSI, Lutheran and Catholic and is engaged in rendering professional and other services to Industry. Despite its limitation of being an all-clerical team, this organisation, may very well set an example of a meaningful and acceptable form of service to industrial society.

Kalamasserry

Joseph Vattamattam

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12. Joseph Vattamattam: "A Study of indebtedness among the lower income group factory workers in Kalamasserry", unpublished Report

# DISCUSSION FORUM

## Marginal Notes to the "Theology of Politics" and the "Call to Revolution"

I should confess, at the very outset, that I am writing these lines in grateful response to the invitation of the General Editor to contribute my thoughts initiating a discussion. This is a new feature of *Jeevadhara*, and it is hoped it will remain a regular one. Let my contribution be these marginal notes to the first two articles of the first number: P. T. Chacko's *Towards a Theology of Politics* (*Jeevadhara* Vol. I/1, pp. 12-28) and Sebastian Kappen's *The Christian and the Call to Revolution* (*ibid.*, pp. 29-45). While I feel that the former article contains a neo-Thomistic misconception of what is today called "political theology", my position *vis-à-vis* the second article is one of basic agreement. However, it would seem that some inconsistency creeps in as the author unfolds his thoughts.

To begin with *Towards a Theology of Politics* where the author finds himself obliged to confront and contradict "political theology" as represented, implicitly or explicitly, by Barth, Bonhoeffer and Metz (pp. 16-19). I am not sure the author hasn't missed the point here. The political theology these theologians stand for is a far cry from any sort of divinization of politics. It is not a theology as the ideological infrastructure of some new ecclesiastical or state politics! Political theology does not mean that "the chief mission of the Christian faith is either political or social" (p. 17). It only means, as the article rightly points out, that Christ's mission is aimed at a multiple emancipation—social, political and historical" (*ibid.*), but there is an essentially complex unity of these various dimensions, a unity constituted by their subordinate relationship to the transcendent and eschatological Kingdom of God. The relevance of Barth's and Bonhoeffer's emphasis of the political dimension of Christian theology can be understood only in its historical context. These two theologians,

perhaps the most influential the Christian churches have produced in this century, were the theological catalysts and spokesmen in the resistance of the German churches to the monstrous Nazi regime. It was they who shocked their "neutral" fellow Christians ("neutral" with their other-worldly theology) into brutal awareness of their bounden *Christian responsibility* to resist that regime, actively and passively. I agree that "Christianity (*as such*) has neither a concrete political theory nor a programme" (p. 18). Only, I would add that Christian faith does, of necessity, oblige the Christian, on occasion, i. e., when the "hour" (*kairos*) strikes, to be committed, *as a Christian*, for or against concrete political theories and programmes. I maintain that "seeking first the Kingdom of God, etc." *can* "involve political missions, directly and chiefly." As surely as the Christian may not simply and generally identify his Christian mission and his civic and political responsibility, neither may he, on the other hand, keep these apart on the theory "that the salvation of the soul is not to be sought through politics" (p. 19). Not only are these two dimensions of the Christian existence essentially inter-related; they can be, on occasion, one and the same. Political theology is an existential Christian theology compulsive of Christian political involvement, not a speculative "theology of politics". And, this is *one* Christian theology, but not *the only one* !

As for *The Christian and the Call to Revolution* the case for the Christian's Christian involvement in political life and activity even unto revolution has been succinctly and convincingly argued. Care has been taken to point out that this involvement should be authentic and total on the one hand, but detached and critical on the other. The Kingdom of God, His transcendent, eschatological gift, is, *as such*, man's secular ethical vocation and task. (Is this not, perhaps, the only answer to the problem posed by the controversy between "liberal theology" with its exclusive insistence on the ethical nature of the Kingdom, and "orthodoxy" which stood exclusively by the opposite, the eschatological?).

But when, on the question of a concrete decision in a political situation the article says, "Here the Gospel can give the believer only a general orientation" and "Here the Christian is thrown back on his own resources" (p. 39), I am afraid I cannot agree. Here, as in my objection above to a similar point, I would

maintain that the eschatological cannot be divorced from the secular, the kairological. Man's secular, kairological decision is not only called for and necessitated by the eschatological reality of the Gospel but should be, in a concrete situation, guided, informed and ultimately determined by it. No one would claim that we have blueprints for political action in the Gospel. It is not that we do not have to "enter into dialogue with other citizens, make use of the data provided by the secular sciences like economics, sociology, political science," etc. (ibid). But all this has to be enlivened and galvanized here and now by the power of the Word and Spirit of Jesus, who is today Lord of the secular reality. Therefore, it is my conviction that "where there is question of building up the future" faith can provide the Christian not merely with "an eschatological horizon of hope that acts (*from outside*) as a source of motivation and as a negative criterion..." (p. 40), but with the eschatological inner centre of man's motive power and discernment constitutive of his necessarily ambivalent and fallible decision.

I am not convinced by the discussion on the use of violence as a means to revolution (pp. 40-43). The concept of violence given here is too undifferentiated and Gandhian. To me it is not at all obvious, however dangerous this may sound, that political or physical violence should always and of necessity be "the child of hatred" (p. 42). This, I am afraid, is to forswear the reality of the Old Testament, divorcing it from the New. This is no less to miss the central message of the *Gita*, which is, after all, a religious-ethical theory of war (and a fratricidal war at that!). Nor is the picture of Jesus as a non-violent revolutionary convincing to me. To paint thus the Man who whipped out of His Father's house the men who traded there, and overturned their tables (cf. Jn 2, 13 ff and par.), who denounced in no sweet language the scribes and pharisees (Mt 23), whose disciples had with them their sword of self-defence on that most sacred evening of His final self-sacrifice (Lk 22, 35-38), is to do Him less than justice. (We do not forget that He disapproved of Peter's use of the sword to defend Him. But the ambivalence of it all!). May be Jesus does shatter all our conceptions and pictures of the ideal man. The Jesus that emerges from the Gospel is different from a Budha or a Gandhi. But



surely disturbing as this is, to make Him a non-violent revolutionary is to caricature Him. The Jesus of the Gospel is neither "revolutionary" nor "violent", however much He could be, now and again, revolutionary and violent as well as disconcertingly "ambivalent" and "uninterested" in regard to the social problems of His day (cf. pp. 43-45, esp. 43). Jesus' commitment and detachment in relation to the secular reality was mysterious and unique, as was His being as Son of Man. These cannot be determined or grasped by our categories, which they determine and define. Jesus can inspire, as he has inspired in the course of history, both non-violent pacifism and violent revolution, with all the ambivalence attached to these. However, it is right to say that we may not look for a blueprint for action in political and secular life in the person of Jesus, but must responsibly take decisions for ourselves under His inspiration and guidance. What stands in radical and total contradiction to Jesus is not violence as such but hatred, or "non-love", which, too, may inspire diabolically cynical pacifism as well as equally diabolical violent revolution. That is why I personally feel no embarrassment to name the violent political engagement of a Bonhoeffer simply his Christian *martyrium* or to find myself positively inclined to the priestly revolutionary engagement in guerilla warfare of a Camillo Torres no less than I wholeheartedly approve the non-violent revolutionary pastoral "politics" of an Archbishop Helder Camara.

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## Notes on Contributors

Fr Henry Volken, S. J., born in Switzerland, came to India in 1948. He had all his Seminary training in India. He took an M. A. in Sociology at Poona University. He is the present Director of the I. S. I. Training Centre, Bangalore, which gives practical training for full-timers in development and community work. He has written many articles on development and Christian commitment.

Fr Alfred de Souza, S. J., was educated at Melbourne, Australia and Columbla University, New York, and has recently completed his doctoral studies at Delhi University. He is on the staff of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, and is the Editor of *Social Action*, a quarterly journal of social trends.

Fr John B. Chethimattam, C. M. I., is Rector and Professor of Theology at Dharmaram College, Bangalore. He has been recently teaching also philosophy at Fordham University, New York. He did his Doctorate in Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome and took a Ph. D. in Philosophy from Fordham University. He also took an year of post-doctoral course in Comparative Religion at Harvard University, Cambridge, U. S. A. He has specialised in Comparative Philosophy and Culture and is deeply interested in the dialogue between Religions. *Consciousness and Reality*, and *Dialogue in Indian Tradition* are some of the books he has published.

Fr Samuel Rayan, S. J., resides at Lumen Institute, Cochin-16. He is visiting Professor at the Papal Athenaeum, Poona and at S. H. College, Shembaganur. He graduated in Malayalam Literature and holds a Doctorate in Theology from the Gregorian University, Rome. He is consultor to the CBCI Commission for Liturgy, and is on several Committees, such as the Sub-committee on Intellectual Formation of Technical Commission for Seminaries,



and Faith and Order Commission of the WCC. He contributes articles to periodicals in India and abroad.

Fr Sebastian Kappen, S. J., did Philosophy at Sacred Heart College, Kodaikanal, and Theology at the Pontifical Seminary, Poona. From 1959 to 1961 he did his doctoral studies in Dogmatic Theology in the Gregorian University, Rome. His doctoral thesis was on "Praxis and Religious Alienation in the Early Writings of Marx". For the last 10 years he has been busy with apostolate among the educated classes, and has contributed articles and studies on Socio-theological topics to Reviews in and outside India. Apart from being co-author and publisher of "*India and the Eucharist*" (1964), he has just published a book in Malayalam on From Faith to Revolution. He has served as visiting Professor in more than one Indian College for ecclesiastical studies, as well as in the University of Louvain, Belgium.

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Prof. Colin Sheppard is Professor and Head of the Department of English, St Joseph College, Calicut and Chairman of the Board of Post-Graduate Studies in English and a member of several academic bodies of Calicut University. He took his B. A. in Mathematics and his M. A. in English Language and Literature from Madras University, and became a Lecturer in English in Travancore University when he was 22. Five years later he was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of English in his College. He worked for a year as Assistant to the Regional Representative for South India, in the British Council, Madras and then returned to teaching, because he found administrative work uncongenial. He has written many textbooks for schools and Grammars for schools and colleges. He is the Literary Editor of *Jeevadhara*.

Fr Joseph Vattamattam, S. J., after his priestly studies in Alwaye and Poona, took an M. A. in Personnel Management and Labour Welfare from Tata Institute of Social Science, Bombay and was placed first in the examination. At present he is engaged in experiments in serving the industrial workers by living and working with them in Kalamassery.

Fr Joseph Kottukappally, S. J., did his priestly studies in Shembaganur, Kodaikanal and Innsbruck, Austria. Currently he is engaged in teaching Theology and doing research in De Nobili College, Poona.